

The effects of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia in high school physical education classes,  
school sports and community sports on future sports and physical activity participation: a  
retrospective study

by

Anik Dennie

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### APPROVED/APPROUVÉ

Thesis Examiners/Examineurs de thèse:

Dr. Ann Pegoraro  
(Supervisor/Directrice de thèse)

Dr. Pat Pickard  
(Committee member/Membre du comité)

Dr. Joël Dickinson  
(Committee member/Membre du comité)

Dr. Kyle Rich  
(External Examiner/Examineur externe)

Approved for the Faculty of Graduate Studies  
Approuvé pour la Faculté des études supérieures  
Dr. David Lesbarrères  
Monsieur David Lesbarrères  
Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies  
Doyen, Faculté des études supérieures

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## ABSTRACT

LGBTQ2-S-phobia is still present within physical education (PE) classes, school sports and community sports. According to Denison and Kitchen (2015), one in five participants reported that PE classes are the most homophobic sporting environment. This mixed method retrospective survey seeks to examine the effects of LGBTQ2-S-phobia in high school PE classes, school and community sports on future sports and physical activity participation along with identifying whether gender and geographical locations are factors in the experiences in which individuals witnessed or had LGBTQ2-S-phobic events in these environments. Results show that PE classes in high schools represent a higher proportion of LGBTQ2-S-phobia than school sports and community sports. Furthermore, those who identify as male and that attended high school in Northern Ontario were faced with higher levels of LGBTQ2-S-phobia. Some experiences in these specific geographical areas discouraged some individuals to pursue physical activity and sports participation.

Keywords: Homophobia, Transphobia, Physical Education, Gender, Sexuality, Rural, Northern Ontario, School Sports, Sports.

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## Chapter 1

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Although it is a well-known fact that not all high school athletes make it to the world of professional sports, we do know that all professional athletes who attended publicly funded schools in Canada went through physical education classes (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2015). In comparison, not all individuals who went through physical education classes have the desire to be included in physical activity and sports. In fact, in the international Out on the Field study, one in four gay men do not participate in sport, and more than half of them blame it on a negative experience in their physical education class (Denison and Kitchen, 2015). According to the GLSEN 2015 National School Climate Survey, physical education classes were the most avoided area in schools in the United States (Kosciw, Greytak, Giga, Villenas and Danischewski, 2016). According to a study published in 2017 by Stevens and colleagues, social connectedness can be a determinate for motivation to be physically active. This implies that a strong and supportive group of people and environments can help encourage physical activity (Stevens, Jahoda, Matthews, Hankey, Melville, Murray and Mitchell, 2017). Therefore, it follows that studying homophobia within physical education classes, school sports and community sports is needed in order to investigate why not all LGBTQ2-S individuals continue into the world of sports, whether at the professional or recreational level. Furthermore, rural regions, such as regions in Northern Ontario, have been shown to have increased levels of homophobia due to various factors including education levels and population size (Kosciw, Greytak and Diaz, 2009). Therefore, this study will try to ascertain what is the experience of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia in physical education classes, school sports and community sports in Northern

Ontario and other Ontario regions. The purpose of this study is to identify the types of homophobic experiences (verbal, physical, cyberbullying etc.) within this context, and to see how these experiences that LGBTQ2-S individuals face can impact their future participation in sport and physical activity. The objectives will be to ascertain the state of homophobia for youth in physical education classes, school sports and community sports in high school, as well as the present state of physical activity habits and sport participation within the LGBTQ2-S community. This data gathered will be analyzed to see if the state of homophobia in these regions differ based on sexuality, gender and or geographical location of the high schools. Lastly, personal experiences of individuals in physical education classes, school sports and community sports in high school will be surveyed to determine if their past experiences have a direct impact on their present state of physical activity.

Physical education classes are, for many, the first introduction to a formal type of physical activity outside of childhood play. In fact, within the Ontario health and physical education curriculum, children start formal physical education classes in first grade and are mandated to take this class up until the 9<sup>th</sup> grade (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2015). This first interaction with physical activity can help shape future opinions and participatory behaviors in physical activity and sport. The first International study on homophobia in sport identified that there is still a presence of homophobia in physical education classes (Denison et al., 2015). Not only is this detrimental to an individuals' health by adding stress; but some LGBTQ2-S participants in this study indicated that it affected their desire to participate in team sports. In fact, a study done in Victoria, Australia, titled Equal Play, reported that physical education classes are the most hostile environments within schools for students who identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual (Symons, O'Sullivan, Borkoles, Andersen and Polman, 2014).

What is the reasoning behind such homophobia in physical education classes, school sports and community sports and why should this be of concern? When looking at the history of sports in the world, starting with the first Olympics, only men were allowed to participate which led to the masculine dominated sports field that we see today (Anderson, 2002). To be a man in sport is to be strong, fast and athletically inclined. Not all men 'fit' into those categories according to societal norms. For example, men who are perceived as being more feminine and 'less than' other men are treated as 'faggot', among other terms, creating a hostile environment for men whose sexuality, or perceived sexuality, does not fit the societal norms (Symons, O'Sullivan and Polman, 2017). As for women, the simple act of being good within the sports world defies cultural norms of masculinity. They are challenging gender roles by being strong, fast and athletically inclined. Although generally, there is less explicit homophobia in women's sports; but according to some studies, there is still implicit homophobia associated with the 'do not ask do not tell' attitudes towards homosexuality (Symons, et al., 2017).

Nevertheless, the environment within the sports world can transcend into physical education classes, school sports and community sports where participants are following the cultural norms set by the larger sporting areas. This is of concern because there have been many positive effects associated with participation in physical education classes and team sports. Unfortunately, research has shown that individuals from the LGBTQ2-S community are just not participating (past 9<sup>th</sup> grade for physical education classes) because of this negative and detrimental climate so consequently they miss out on these positive effects (Denison et al., 2015). Therefore, it is crucial to identify homophobia in physical education courses, school sports and community sports, and measure the impact that this discrimination has on the participants. Identifying these factors will help to guide future intervention methods to make

physical education classes, school sports and community sports safe and enjoyable for all as well as to encourage future participation in physical activity and sports.

Northern Ontario is a place of special interest for homophobia, biphobia and transphobia. According to Herek (2002), students living in rural areas and small towns, as is the case for Northern Ontario, face more negative views towards people of the LGBT community. According to the OECD rural communities' definition, all districts in Northern Ontario are considered rural seeing as they all have less than 150 people per square kilometer of land (Statistics Canada, 2001). This area merits special attention due to its geographical and population density correlating to the possibility of an increase in negative attitudes towards LGBT individuals.

This study will attempt to identify the forms of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia in physical education classes, school sports and community sports in Northern Ontario, and therefore, the results can help to guide educational policy makers on possible courses of actions to try to counter this discrimination. In addition, the dissemination of the results of this study have the potential to lead to greater awareness of the presence of such discrimination and increase awareness of this issue. Furthermore, the knowledge of how homophobia, transphobia and biphobia affect the levels of participation in future physical activity and sport will help different physical activity programs to tailor their environment to make it more welcoming to all, and to encourage all youth to engage in physical activity (Kosciw et al., 2009). The next chapter will provide a review of the literature related to this study followed by a chapter outlining the methods utilized and then the results of the study will be presented. Finally, the results will be discussed and situated within both research literature and in terms of practical implications. It is to note that within the literature review and discussion, American and Australian studies have been used in order to situate this study and provide comparisons as both countries have rural and

urban populations. Although the environment in terms of homophobia might not be the same, it is a starting point in order to fill the gaps in the Canadian literature.

## Chapter 2

### 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review will start by examining the manifestation of homophobia and transphobia in sports and in high school physical education classes. This will help frame the understanding of the current LGBTQ2-S climate in high school physical education classes and sports. Next, the current levels of physical activity and sports participation for LGBTQ2-S youth along with the positive effects of physical activity on health, and the detrimental effects of LGBT-phobia on health will be explored. The literature review will also encompass the information on the role of rural context on the experience of LGBTQ2-S individuals. Definitions of most terms related to sexuality, gender and physical activity context can be found in Appendix A for reference.

#### 2.1 HOMOPHOBIA IN SPORTS AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Although the literature pertaining to homophobia in physical education classes is limited, it is possible to trace such discrimination in sport throughout history. The stigma of homosexuality in sports stems from the notion that sports were created to make boys into real men, real here referring to heterosexual cis-gender men (Ayvazo and Sutherland, 2009; Calzo et al., 2013; Clarke, 1998; Greendorfer and Robinson, 1997). Sports were deemed a place of “strength, power, speed and combat”, and were considered essential in shaping the characteristics of dominant masculinity (Symons et al., 2010, p.14). This idea is still present in today’s Western society (Symons et al., 2010). According to Clarke (2006), the same rule applies

in physical education classes where physical education classes are designed to make boys into real heterosexual men.

When a woman engages in a sporting activity she is going against the hegemonic heterosexual masculinity of sports, and thus being perceived as 'masculine' (Greendorfer et al., 1997). This causes both homophobia and heterosexism. The state of masculinity is contrary to the social construct of femininity that women are 'fragile'. The masculinity of sports has thus been associated with the lesbian status in order to follow the patriarchy of sports (Greendorfer et al., 1997). Therefore, women who engage in sports are assumed to be lesbians (Ayvazo et al., 2009; Greendorfer et al., 1997; Lenskyj, 1991; Symons et al., 2010). However, there are certain sports in which the sexuality of woman is not called into question, such as gymnastics because of the feminine characteristics associated with it as a sport. The same cannot be said about women participating in ice hockey (Larsson, Fagrell, and Redelius, 2009; Squires and Sparkes, 1996).

Women have often contradicted this belief in many ways, often through hyper-femininity (Greendorfer et al., 1997; Lenskyj, 1991). If women dress and act in a very feminine way while doing sports, this establishes their heterosexuality. In sports, the words feminine and heterosexual are seen as interchangeable terms just as masculine, unfeminine and lesbians are used as interchangeable terms (Greendorfer et al., 1997; Lenskyj, 1991). This concept is said to have first appeared in the 1930's (Cahn, 1993). So, by appearing as feminine as possible, these women would not be perceived as lesbians in the eyes of their teammates, coaches, and spectators, (Ayvazo et al., 2009; Clarke, 1998; Greendorfer et al., 1997). This image of hyper-femininity in sports is also portrayed in the media, thus furthering the stigma (Clarke, 1998). Unfortunately, this state of mind is still present, and continues to discourage women from

participating in sports (Greendorfer et al., 1997). Therefore, by enforcing heterosexism, sports foster a homophobic environment for women (Greendorfer et al., 1997).

As for homosexual and bisexual men in sports, the same idea of ‘making boys into men’ can be applied to further understand the link between sports and homophobia. Sports were used in the 20<sup>th</sup> century as a tool to prevent the boys from becoming feminine and thus prevent them from becoming gay (Anderson & White, 2016). In fact, since sports are a place to celebrate and promote hegemonic heterosexual masculinity (Clarke, 1998), what happens to those men who are gay in sports? In sports, gay men are seen as being a negation of masculinity (Clarke, 1998). When men are not playing to others’ expectations, or are not performing as usual, their heterosexuality is called into question as a way to entice men to better perform (Symons et al., 2010). Thus, heterosexual and heterosexist comments and actions are a way to celebrate the state of masculinity and heterosexuality in sports, thereby, furthering the idea that sports are only made for heterosexual men.

The same attitude can be seen in physical education classes where boys are made into ‘real’ heterosexual men and make girls into real feminine women as depicted in two different ways in literature (Ayvazo et al., 2009; Clarke, 2006). The first way being from the perspective of the physical education educators. Many studies have reported on the risks of being women in the area of physical education. Because the same rules of masculinity of sports apply to physical education, women in this field must be careful and make efforts to be perceived as heterosexual (Ayvazo et al., 2009; Clarke, 2006; Greendorfer et al., 1997; Lenskyj, 1991; Squires et al., 1996). In the early 1900’s, women that were found to be lesbians could be fired for such ‘behaviour’. If not fired they were subject to harassment, victimization, and limited professional mobility (Ayvazo et al., 2009; Clarke, 2006). It is for this reason that women in this field have concealed

their sexuality to protect their vulnerability. They did this in many ways, including passing as heterosexual by talking about former male lovers, self-distancing by isolating themselves from their peers and students, and staying very private in their personal lives (Ayvazo et al., 2009; Squires et al., 1996), along with distancing of individuals who were 'out' about their sexuality, including other teachers and students, thus furthering the oppression (Clarke, 2006). This led to multiple cases of isolation, misunderstanding and dishonesty (Ayvazo et al., 2009). These teachers would not intervene in homophobic or heterosexist behaviors within their physical education classrooms for fear of being labeled as lesbians (Ayvazo et al., 2009; Lenskyj, 1991).

Furthermore, although women were more at risk of harassment within the profession of physical education, men and women did share discriminatory conditions. In fact, both lesbian women and gay men were seen as pedophiles (Ayvazo et al., 2009; Clarke, 2006; Lenskyj, 1991). Teachers were thus even more vulnerable in physical education classes because of the 'hands on' culture of gym classes. By enticing fear related to the teachers' sexuality, this decreased their ability to speak up when events of homophobia did occur for the fear of being outed or accused of homosexuality.

We can thus see that women face homophobia in sports based on the fact that sports are for men and so, there is no way that 'real' heterosexual women participate in sports. Therefore, women who do participate in sports must be lesbians. Men on the other hand face homophobia in sports when not performing at an optimal level during which their sexuality will be questioned as a way to entice better performance.

It is important to note that according to Anderson, there is a change of climate in terms of homophobia in sports (Anderson and Bullingham, 2015; Anderson, 2002). In fact, one study done in 2002 showed that openly gay male athletes did have a generally positive experience once



they had come out to their team mates. When asked how the experience was afterwards however, they did not always see that they were in very heteronormative situations. The athletes kept seeing their experience in a positive way and referred to their experience in a ‘it could have been worse’ kind of discourse (Anderson, 2002). Furthermore, the athletes also did report still hearing things like “knock it off, fag” when athletes were speaking to others while frustrated showing that there was still that use of homophobic discourse between athletes (Anderson, 2002 p.871).

The same situation of acceptance was seen in women’s sports. For women however there was the attitudes of “we know it exists, but we are not going to recognize it or talk about it” from teammates (Anderson et al., 2015 p.655). Athletes do not get asked about their significant others as heterosexual athletes get asked and so they are starting to be accepted as gay as long as they do not talk about it. (Anderson, 2002; Anderson et al., 2015). Through this, the shift from homophobia to homophobia is noted, where individuals are being accepted as being gay but only if they do not talk about it for fear that the rest of the team will be perceived as gay or lesbian as well (Anderson et al., 2015).

## 2.2 TRANSPHOBIA IN SPORTS AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Very little research has been done on the status of transphobia in sports, and even less in physical education classes. In fact, most studies will either look at the policy aspects of transgender people’s participation in binary sports (Jones, Arcelus, Bouman, and Haycraft, 2017; Jones, Haycraft, Bouman, and Arcelus, 2018; Love, 2014; Love, 2017) or, they will focus on qualitative experiences of people who identify as transgender in sports (Hargie, Mitchell, and Somerville, 2017; Ogilvie, 2017; Elling and d’Escury, 2017).

As mentioned in the biographical narrative interviews conducted by Ogilvie (2017), sports are a highly dichotomous terrain. For this reason, there have been many attempts at

creating policies to see where transgender people ‘fit’ in the sporting world. Therefore, when looking at the history of policies for transgender athletes, we can see that they created a certain level of institutional transphobia. This idea of ensuring that athletes participate in the right gender category can be traced back all the way to the Olympics in ancient Greece. During these times, men had to participate naked. This was a visual verification that only men were participating in the sporting events (Love, 2014). Although with the evolution of Olympics, athletes were no longer required to participate naked, they were still subject to sex verification. In fact, in the 1960’s women who participated in sporting events had to not only be subject to a visual examination, but also a genealogical test, to ensure that they were in fact women (Love, 2014). This type of verification was stopped in 1969 when the International Olympic Committee decided to implement chromosome testing in lieu of visual verification of women’s gender (Love, 2014). The practice of chromosome testing ceased before the Summer Olympics of 2000 (Love, 2014).

Although this practice was no longer conducted, the International Olympic Committee, along with other sporting organizations still felt as if transgender people posed a threat to sports. They stated that “the overriding sporting objective is and remains the guarantee of fair competition. Restrictions on participation are appropriate to the extent that they are necessary and proportionate to the achievement of that objective” (International Olympic Committee, 2015, p.2). For this reason, the Stockholm Consensus was introduced before the 2004 Summer Olympic Games (Love, 2014). This policy requires participants to have undergone a sex reassignment surgery and completed two years of hormone therapy, among other criteria in order to participate in their ‘new gender’ (Love, 2014). This policy contained many flaws, for example, requiring a surgical procedure for participation which was highly invasive procedure along with

the fact that not all countries had the resources, knowledge and acceptance to be able to do such surgery, thus, excluding many transgender folks from participation (Love, 2014). For these reasons, the International Olympic Committee has since changed the policy for transgender people to participate in high level events. This new policy states that trans men are allowed to participate in male events without any restrictions; but trans women participating in high level events must ‘declare their gender identity as female, and undergo regular testosterone level tests for 12 months before the first competition along with during the event (International Olympic Committee, 2015). Although some athletes have been able to successfully participate in high caliber sporting events, some, such as the athletes in Ogilvie’s 2017 (p.113) study “made it clear that being a transgender athlete competing in sports within the gender binary has been extremely challenging and disheartening”.

In spite of the fact that this policy appears to be inclusive, it still portrays a certain amount of transphobia towards those whose gender does not match their assigned sex at birth. In fact, this policy is very inclusive for those who are gender-conforming, meaning those who wish to undergo hormone therapy but, is highly restrictive for those who identify more along the spectrum of gender-transforming, including those who do not identify with a gender, are gender fluid, or those who do not wish to undergo hormone treatment (Love, 2014). With this mentality in high level sports, it is not surprising that transphobia exists at lower levels of the sporting world, including physical education classes. In fact, according to the *Out in Sports* study, 38.9% of trans respondents were turned off by gendered sports teams (National Student Union, 2012). Similarly, 80% of trans respondents in a different study reported having personally experienced or witnessed homophobia or transphobia in sports, and 79% of people who identified as trans in this study said that both homophobia and transphobia are barriers to the participation of LGBT

people in sports (Smith, Cuthbertson and Gale, 2012). While 22% of trans participants responded never having participated in sports and physical activity, 68% said that they would be more likely to participate if these settings were more LGBT friendly (Smith et al., 2012).

More specific areas of concerns that have been mentioned for transgender people can be categories as both internal and external barriers. Some external barriers to sports participation mentioned include the discomfort associated with the gendered changing rooms and showers (Hargie et al., 2017; Jones et al., 2017), the sports related clothing, including the conflict between wanting to wear the stereotypical attire attributed to one's gender all while wanting to conceal one's body along with the uncertainty of where one belongs in team sports after transitioning (Jones et al., 2017). Particular to this issue is the concern raised from trans male participants that they no longer feel as though they belong in female sports; but they fear for their physical safety while playing with cisgender males (Jones et al., 2017). Internal barriers for participation in sports and physical activity included a stage of gender incongruence, including participants who opted to stop physical activity in order to socially transition or until they perceived their bodies as being up to their expectations (Jones et al., 2017). Furthermore, the anxiety of other reactions, body dissatisfaction (Jones et al., 2017) and the memory of negative experiences in school sports (Hargie et al., 2017) were also mentioned.

In spite of the fact that physical activity has been proven to be positive for people who are transgender because of factors such as increased body satisfaction and good health for gender-confirming surgery (Jones et al., 2017), there remains high levels of transphobia, both at the institutional and individual levels, that act as barriers for sports and physical activity participation of transgender people. It is thus, not surprising to see that transgender individuals engage in less physical activity than their cisgender counterparts (Jones et al., 2018). It is to note

that transphobia is a relatively new subject within the conversation of sports and so, the literature available is limited.

### 2.3 CURRENT CLIMATE IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION CLASSES

According to the current literature, the present state of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia in physical education classes is not a positive one. Most studies that have looked at school atmosphere as a whole have reported physical education classes, along with change rooms, to be some of the most feared and targeted area of harassment based on sexuality and gender expression in the school (Kosciw, Greytak, Giga, Villenas and Danischewski, 2016; Hemphill and Symons, 2009; Symons et al., 2010). This created a culture of avoidance and fear within these settings. In fact, according to a GLSEN (2013) study, more than half of the students who took physical education classes in the United States had either been bullied or harassed because of either their sexuality (52.8%), or their gender expression (50.9%). This resulted in 32.5% of LGBT students avoiding physical education class, locker rooms (39%), and school's athletics fields and facilities (2.8%) (GLSEN 2013; Hemphill et al., 2009; Symons et al., 2010). The most common forms of discrimination included verbal abuse, physical harassment and physical assault (Symons et al., 2010). An Australian study demonstrated that verbal abuse was the most common form of discrimination in physical education classes with 53.1% of students reporting such events, and 32.3% reporting this happened on a 'semi-regular' basis (Symons et al., 2010). To be more specific, physical education classes are the areas in the school with the highest frequency of homophobic language with 60% of respondents reporting that they heard language like 'that's so gay' frequently, and other homophobic remarks such as 'dyke' and 'faggot' used in a derogatory way frequently (35%). As for physical abuse and assaults, although less common than verbal assault, they were still present with 20% of the students reporting that

these events did happen sometimes. When asking teachers versus students the frequency of these events, almost all teachers reported hearing both homophobic and heterosexist comments frequently and admitting to using heterosexist comments within their physical education classes (Morrow et Gill, 2003). As for the students, they reported a higher number of heterosexist and homophobic comments and behaviors than the teachers and reported a higher amount of homophobic behaviors coming from the teachers themselves (Morrow et al., 2003). These behaviors were reported more often by girls than boys (Morrow et al., 2003).

The consequences of the high levels of harassment and assault in physical education courses are worrisome. In fact, according to the *Out of the Field* study in 2015, many gay men said that their experience in physical education classes as youth turned them off from playing sports after high school (Denison et al., 2015). It was reported that some did continue to play sports despite the negative experience that they have had in the past, along with some participants indicating positive experiences in physical education (Symons et al. 2014). Despite these results it is worrisome that the Out on the Field study revealed that physical education led to serious mental health problems in participants along with the fact that some abandon sports as a result of negative experiences in physical education classes (Denison et al., 2015).

## 2.4 CURRENT CLIMATE IN SPORTS

According to the Out on the Field study by Denison et al., (2015), there are few signs that LGB individuals are neither welcomed nor safe when participating in sports. In fact, 73% of the participants in this international study reported that they did not believe that LGBT youth were safe/welcomed in sports (Denison et al., 2015). The participants also reported that the sporting culture was, according to them, less accepting towards LGB individuals than the general society (Denison et al., 2015). This reflection of the participants was also present in an Australian study

that reported that both school sports (a little over 25%) and club sports (18%) reported verbal abuse at a frequency of ‘sometimes’ or ‘frequently’ (Symons et al., 2014). As for the frequency of hearing homophobic language such as ‘that’s so gay’, a little under 50% reported hearing this ‘frequently’ and a little under 20% reported the same for club sports (Symons et al., 2014). Homophobic slurs were heard just over 30% of the time in school sports, and a little under 15% in club sports at a frequent rate (Symons et al., 2014). It is thus not surprising to see that both gay men, lesbian women and bisexual individuals have a lower physical activity level than their heterosexual peers. This lower level of physical activity is reported not only within sexual minority adolescents (Calzo et al., 2013; Saewyc, Poon, Wang, Homma, Smith et the McCreary Centre Society, 2007); but also follows them into adulthood (Calzo et al., 2013). According to an American study, only 23.3% of LGBT students reported participating in interschool sports; this number fell to 13.4% for those who participated in intramural sports (GLSEN, 2013). This report also reflects the same trends as the Out on the Field study as 25% of the LGBT student athletes reported assault, harassment, or both, due to either their sexuality (27.8%) or their gender expression (29.4%) (Denison et al., 2015). Discrimination and assaults based on sexuality and gender expression prevented individuals from playing sports to their full potential and in a safe environment (GLSEN, 2013; National Union of Students, 2012).

The unsafe environment has been seen to influence the way in which LGBT individuals participate in sports. Some individuals opt to participate in sports while hiding their sexuality from others; while others choose to participate in individual sporting events where they can avoid both change rooms and team showers (Symons et al., 2010). This was even worse for individuals in the transgender community where, because of the strong gender component of sports, most had a negative experience in school sports (Symons et al., 2010). It is to note that

sexual minority men had a lower level of participation in sports than sexual minority women. This is because the consequences of being a gay man in sports are greater than being a lesbian in sports (Symons et al., 2010). For a gay man in sports, the risk of being outed is that of physical harassment and assault (Symons et al., 2017). While sexual minority women are silenced when individuals discover their sexuality. This is because women are already perceived as being lesbians in sports, and so if there is a lesbian on the team, they fear that society would assume that the rest of the women on the team are also sexual minorities (Symons et al., 2017)

Although some organizations, such as *Outsports*, are reporting an increase in positive ‘coming out’ stories in professional sports, this is not the case for most of LGBT youth. They are faced with much adversity in sports leading them to conceal their sexuality or quit sports all together as proven with the studies stated above. According to studies done by Anderson and colleagues do however show that although many athletes stay in the closet due to fear, there is a certain amount of inclusivity spreading within sports (Anderson et al., 2016).

## 2.5 PRESENT LEVELS OF SPORT PARTICIPATION IN LGBTQ2-S YOUTH

It is difficult to compare the physical activity levels of LGBTQ2-S individuals versus cis-gendered, heterosexual individuals because very few studies have been done in this regard. In fact, a recent study done in Australia indicated that youth in general are becoming increasingly disengaged in physical activity and sports (Australian Sports Commission, 2017). The findings of these studies demonstrate that the peak participation in sport-related activity is between the ages of 9-11. After this age, the levels of non-sport-related activity increase as the levels of sport-related activity decrease dramatically (Australian Sports Commission, 2017).

LGBTQ2-S students are a particularly vulnerable group of individuals in sports and physical activity settings when considering the disparities, they face. It is thus not surprising that



according to the 2011 GLSEN survey, only 23.3% of LGBT students participated in interschool sports, 13.4% in intramural sports and 8.2% in both of these activities (GLSEN, 2013).

Furthermore, in the 2010 Australian study, they found that 44% of participants only reached the minimum weekly levels of physical activity and, 13.6% were not active at all (Symons et al., 2010). The authors indicated that these levels are higher than previous studies; but that this might be due to the fact that many sports-oriented individuals filled out the survey (Symons et al., 2010). Although there was a higher than average number of LGBT individuals participating in sports, their physical activity level was still inferior to that of heterosexual and cis-gendered individuals. Of the LGBT individuals participating in team sports 46% were not out to anybody, 22.5% were 'out' to some and only 20.5% were out to all (Symons et al., 2010).

We can thus conclude that the levels of physical activity and sport participation of the LGBT population are lower than heterosexual and cis-gender people. Furthermore, the inability to be their true selves in sports further alienates and isolates this already vulnerable population.

## 2.6 EFFECTS OF HOMOPHOBIA, BIPHOBIA & TRANSPHOBIA ON HEALTH

Many approaches can be taken in order to study the effects of homophobia, biphobia & transphobia on the health of LGBTQ2-S individuals. For example, one could do a meta-analysis of all the published research on intergroup (LGBTQ2-S) health studies, looking at the health of LGBTQ2-S individuals. Others may look at differences in health status between heterosexual and cis-gender people versus LGBTQ2-S individuals. Although both of these approaches would prove useful in identifying the health disparities in the LGBTQ2-S population, an overarching explanation of such difference in health status would prove more valuable in identifying the source of the disparities.

Meyer (2003) published research that attempted to explain the Minority Stress theory in relation to the mental health of the LGB population (Meyer, 2003). In the article, Meyer (2003) describes stress on a continuum of distal to proximal stressors. This leads to the identification of three processes of minority stress. The first, external stressors, are defined as “objective stressful events and conditions” (Meyer, 2003, p.676); the second one, “expectations of such events and the vigilance this expectation requires” (Meyer, 2003, p.676), in other words, the expectation of discrimination based on sexuality. Finally, there is the “internalization of negative societal attitudes” (Meyer, 2003, p.676). It is noteworthy that other authors in this field of study have included the concealment of one’s sexuality as a proximal stressor in links with internalized homophobia as stated in Meyer’s (2003) article.

In a brief description, minority stress is the added stress of distal and proximal factors to the life of an LGBT individual. Individuals from this group face the same stressors as the rest of the population; but must add the stressors of belonging to a minority group (Meyer, 2003; Symons et al., 2017). This can lead to adverse health effects such as an increase in mental health disorders including anxiety, depression, and substance use, along with suicidal ideation (Meyer, 2003).

There are a certain number of protective factors that have been identified as aiding in the minority stress affects. Things like the process of ‘coming out’, and accepting one’s sexuality, has been proven to diminish the effects of internalized homophobia (Meyer, 2003). Furthermore, belonging to a group of individuals that are also part of the LGBT community has also been proven to help diminish the effects of this stress (Meyer, 2003). Therefore, past research has demonstrated that individuals from the LGBT community are at an increased risk for stressful life events that can translate into health disparities and mental illness.

## 2.7 EFFECTS OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND SPORT ON HEALTH

Many studies have evaluated the effects of exercise on the mental health of individuals. Although there seems to be an inconsistency between the amount of exercise needed along with the suggested intensity, most studies have revealed that regular exercise can aid in diminishing symptoms of depression (Janssen and LeBlanc, 2010; Paluska and Schwenk, 2000; Penedo and Dahn, 2005) and anxiety (Paluska et al., 2000; Penedo et al., 2005). Therefore, given the right amount of time and physical exertion, physical activity and sports can have a positive effect on the mental health and well-being of individuals.

## 2.8 MINORITY STRESS AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND SPORTS

Physical activity and sports have been proven to have the potential to aid in an individual's mental health. The culture of heterosexism, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and masculinity in sports have adverse health effects for the LGBTQ2-S community. Based on Meyer's (2003) theory on Minority stress, belonging to a group that shares the same minority identity can serve as a buffer for the negative health effect this status can have on one's health. This is seemingly impossible because, as stated previously, most people who participate in sports are either not out at all about their sexuality, or only out to certain individuals (Symons et al., 2010). Thus, by evaluating the climate in these settings, strategies can be put in place in order to increase the amount of comfort for youth being out in sports and physical activity; thus, increasing the internal network of support for LGBTQ2-S people in sports. Furthermore, by evaluating the experiences of youth in physical education classes, school sports and community sports, we can look at the disparities in conditions along with the victimization for LGBTQ2-S individuals. This will help further address the issue; thus, aiming for a safer place for physical activity, so all can have the benefits of this activity.

Therefore, the literature indicates that the current climate in physical education, school sports and community sports is not optimal. The culture of masculinity, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and heterosexism can lead to multiple adverse health effects for LGBTQ2-S participants. This can discourage individuals to participate in sports; leading to physical inactivity, and, subsequently, adverse health effects. By evaluating the current climate, we can identify barriers, attitudes, and areas of possible improvement in order to foster a culture of acceptance in physical education, school sports and sports so that all individuals, regardless of their sexuality or gender identity/expression can participate in physical activity and/or sports, thus receiving its benefits.

## 2.9 FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO DETRIMENTAL CONDITIONS FOR LGBTQ2-S STUDENTS AND INDIVIDUALS IN RURAL AREAS

### 2.9.1 POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

When comparing the climate of urban, rural and suburban areas, there are many differences identified in the literature as being detrimental to LGBTQ2-S students and individuals. Education levels have been linked to the frequency in which youth would hear derogatory terms such as ‘gay’, ‘faggot’, ‘that’s so gay’ etc. Youth living within communities with a higher number of college graduates were less likely to hear these terms used in a derogatory way (Kosciw et al., 2009). When looking at the averages in Ontario in 2016, 10.4% of the entire population did not have a certificate, diploma or degree (25-64 years of age). When comparing the provincial average to Northern regions we can see that Northern Ontario Rural districts have a lower education rate than that of the provincial average (Statistics Canada, 2017). The breakdown of post-secondary education can be found in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Post-secondary education levels in Northern Ontario districts (Statistics Canada, 2017)

District	% of people not having a certificate, diploma or degree
Algoma District	12.2%
Cochrane District	17.4%
Greater Sudbury District	10.8%
Manitoulin District	14.8%
Nipissing District	12.5%
Parry Sound District	13.7%
Rainy River District	14.2%
Thunder Bay District	13.4%
Timiskaming	18.1%

Based on this table and on the findings from Kosciw et al. (2009), the potential risk of hearing derogatory terms in Northern Ontario can be assumed to be greater because of the higher percentage of individuals not having post-secondary education.

#### 2.9.2 SCHOOL FACTORS IN RURAL AREAS

Small schools were reported to be less safe than bigger schools (Kosciw et al., 2009; Goodenow et al., 2006); schools with a lower ethnic diversity saw an increase in LGBT students skipping school out of fear, higher suicide attempts and an increase in reports of victimization and suicidality (Goodenow et al., 2006).

In rural communities, there is an increase in harassment and assault related to LGBT individuals (Kosciw et al., 2009), and an increase in reported victimization and suicidality (Goodenow et al., 2006; Kosciw, et al., 2009). Youth in urban areas are less likely to experience victimization based on gender expression (Kosciw et al., 2009).

#### 2.9.3 DIVERSITY EXPOSURE

According to Herek (2002), there was an increase in positive attitudes towards bisexual individuals when they had contact with bisexual people either in their work or personal life. The researcher goes on to state that “respondents who live in small towns and have not attended

college are probably less likely to have opportunities for contact” (Herek, 2002, p.272). It can thus be hypothesized that the lack of diversity in Northern Ontario along with the higher than average level of individuals that do not have a post-secondary education can have a negative effect on individual’s attitudes towards bisexual individuals.

#### 2.9.4 HEALTH SERVICES

People living in Northern Ontario have a lower life expectancy due to higher detrimental health factors such as obesity, high smoking rates, rheumatoid arthritis and high blood pressure (Canadian Mental Health Association, 2009). Added to these health disparities is a high rate of depression for those living in Northern Ontario. These health inequalities are due to multiple factors including inaccessibility to services, medical centers, specialists and community services and support. Along with the lack of health care service providers, the distance to travel to health care centers can be a barrier for many (Canadian Mental Health Association, 2009).

Considering the fact that accessibility to health care is difficult in Northern Ontario, one may question the amount of culturally appropriate health care received by the LGBTQ2-S community. A study by Preston, D’Augello, Kassab and Starks (2007) identified higher stigma coming from the health care providers in regard to men having sex with men suffering from HIV. Furthermore, a culturally appropriate medical system is needed (Eliason et Hughes, 2004). Unfortunately, practitioners in urban settings have a higher education level on LGBT issues, treat more LGBT individuals and consequently have more positive attitudes towards this population in comparison to rural doctors (Eliason et al., 2004). This reflects in the rates of poor health in rural settings including high levels of depression and an increase feeling of social isolation, marginalization and invisibility (Galliher, Rostosky, and Hughes, 2004).

### 2.9.5 DIFFERENCES IN RURAL AND URBAN POPULATIONS

Challenges present in rural areas are different than those in urban areas. For example, in rural areas, due to lower population levels, the population is more homogenous. This creates pressure to conform to the community standards thus creating barriers to the expression of diversity. This lack of diversity would increase the pressure to 'fit in' and conform thus increasing the social isolation of belonging to the minority LGBTQ2-S community. This lack of diversity makes rural areas susceptible to increased homophobia towards for those whose sexuality, perceived sexuality and gender expression is different than the community 'norm' (Snively, 2004).

Because of factors listed above, these rural districts are more suited to study to provide data that can be used to develop interventions in communities that do not always get those chances due to their geographical location. When taking into consideration the negative climate in physical education classes, school sports and community sports that has been documented in the literature, it can be suggested that the same climate may exist in Northern Ontario when compared to other Ontario regions due to the rurality of the location and the small population size. For this reason, this study will not only seek to examine the current climate in regard to homophobia, biphobia and transphobia in these settings; but also explore how these experiences may affect future participation in sports and physical education.

Therefore, the purpose of this study will be guided through the following research questions:

RQ1: What is the environment of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia (experiences/witnessed) in high school physical education classes, school sports and community sports in Ontario?

RQ1a: Does the experience of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia differ by sport context?

RQ1b: Does the experience of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia in these contexts differ based on sexuality?

RQ1c: Does the experience of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia in these contexts differ based on gender?

RQ1d: Does the experience of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia in these contexts differ based on geographic location?

RQ2: Does experience of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia in high school physical education classes, school sports and community sports impact future sports and physical activity participation?



## Chapter 3

### 3. METHODS

In this section the survey tool that was utilized for data collection will be discussed. A definition of rural and how it relates to Northern Ontario will be provided to illustrate the distinction between this region and other regions in Ontario. Ethical considerations will be discussed as will the data collection data analysis for the study.

#### 3.1 SURVEY

This study was conducted using an online survey. It was initially informed by both the Out on the Field International study done in 2015 by Denison and Kitchen and a 2014 study by Symons, O’Sullivan, Borkoles, Andersen and Polman’s (2014) done in Australia. The survey questions were crafted based on the questions used in this survey and modified as required to fit the Ontario context.

In order to have a logical flow in the survey, it was broken up into five parts. This allowed for the utilization of branching logic to ensure that questions that were not pertinent to the individuals filing out the survey were not seen. For example, those who identified as heterosexual and cis-gender were not asked to whom they were ‘out’ to in Physical Education classes, school sports and community sports. Furthermore, those who identified that they did not participate in school sports and/or community sports did not see the questions evaluating the climate in these settings. The complete survey can be found in appendix D and the five parts of the survey are as follow:

- Part I: Demographic questions.
- Part II: Questions regarding participants’ experiences in their high school physical education classes including, but not excluding questions comparing the climate in

physical education classes to general school climate along with questions regarding physical, and verbal harassment based on sexuality, and gender.

- Part III: Questions regarding participants' experiences in school sports in high school.
- Part IV: Questions regarding individual's experiences in community sports.
- Part V: Open ended questions asking individuals about their current levels of physical activity, and sports participation. Questions include how incidences in their high school physical education, school sports, and/or community sports are affecting their current levels of physical activity, and sports participation now as university students. See appendix D for the full survey.

Part II, III and IV were based by the Out on the Field (Denison et al., 2015); but were adapted to include the sport's most commonly played in high school in Ontario along with questions being divided based on the Symons et al., 2014 study which included open ended questions asking participants how their experience was in each setting. Although the time to fill out the survey will vary based on individual's experiences, the survey took about 15-20 minutes to fill out.

Additional changes were made to the original surveys as they have been merged and adjusted to reflect Ontario demographics. For example, demographic questions were modified in order to assess from which geographic regions individuals grew up, and in which geographic area they did most of their high school. Some questions were also added in order to compare the climate of physical education classes, school sports, and community sports as divided in Symons et al., study in 2014. Finally, as noted above, a section was added to take in to account current physical activity levels. The use of self-reported perception of physical activity was used as opposed to a standardized physical activity assessment scale seeing as the goal of the study is not

to measure the exact time of physical activity; but more how past experiences are affecting current physical activity levels. Finally, a question was added to see if the high school that participants attended had an anti-discrimination policy for gender and sexual diversity seeing as a school with such policy reported higher support based on sexuality and/or gender than those who did not have such policies (Taylor et al., 2011).

### 3.2 DEFINING RURAL AND SITUATING NORTHERN ONTARIO

For the purpose of this study, rural regions will be defined according to the OECD rural communities' definition which is "individuals in communities with less than 150 persons per square km. This includes the individuals living in the country side, towns and small cities" as stated in the *Rural and Small Town Canada Analysis Bulletin* (Statistics Canada, 2001, p.6). The use of this specific definition allowed the study to capture all of the Northern Ontario districts. Within some definition of the *Rural and Small Town Canada Analysis Bulletin*, Sudbury and Thunder Bay were not considered rural. By choosing this definition it was ensured that even those in borderline rural areas were included as rural in order to capture the vastness of some of the districts. Although Sudbury and Thunder have higher populations (thus not categorized as rural in all the definitions), the geographical area that is considered Sudbury and Thunder Bay is vast thus eliminating the frequency of contact and city-like feel.

This study will thus be focusing on the Rural regions of Northern Ontario all while comparing the climate to other Ontario regions. Northern Ontario will be defined according to the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (2011), a branch of the Ontario Government and it includes the following regions: Algoma District, Cochrane District, Kenora District, Manitoulin District, Nipissing District, Parry Sound District, Rainy River District, Sudbury District, Thunder Bay District and Timiskaming District (Ontario, n.d.).

In order to use Rural and Northern Ontario as interchangeable terms, each district's population per square km must be considered. The results, according to Statistics Canada (2017) 2016 census can be found in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Population per square kilometer of Northern Ontario districts.

District	Population per square kilometer
Algoma District	2.3
Cochrane District	0.6
Kenora District	0.2
Manitoulin District	4.3
Nipissing District	4.9
Parry Sound District	4.6
Rainy River District	1.3
Sudbury District	0.5
Thunder Bay district	1.4
Timiskaming District	2.4

Based on this evidence, Northern Ontario districts are considered to be rural according to the definition by the OECD. It is thus appropriate to hypothesize that previous studies on barriers for LGBTQ2-S individuals in rural regions would reflect the realities of those living in Northern Ontario.

### 3.3 ETHICS

Ethics was obtained from the Laurentian University Research Ethics Board on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018. The letter is situated in appendix E. The survey was promoted on social media websites such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. It was also sent through the Laurentian University Communications office to all students, staff, and faculty who had a Laurentian University email account during the second round of recruitment. Different recruitment scripts were used based on the population targeted through each media and are located in the appendix B. Participants had to read and consent to the study before beginning the survey. The letter on consent can be found in Appendix E.

### 3.4 DATA COLLECTION

Study data were collected and managed using REDCap electronic data capture tools hosted at Laurentian University. REDCap (Research Electronic Data Capture) is a secure, web-based application designed to support data captured for research studies, providing 1) an intuitive interface for validated data entry; 2) audit trails for tracking data manipulation and export procedures; 3) automated export procedures for seamless data download to common statistical packages; and 4) procedures for importing data from external sources (Harris, Taylor, Thielke, Payne, Gonzalez et Conde, 2009).

The first round of recruiting was initiated on May 2nd, 2018 via Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. Recruitment was done 3 times in order to maximize the response rate. The survey was re-tweeted on May 15th and June 3rd. At this time, 202 individuals filled out the survey. Of those 202 responses 96 surveys were complete. The rest of the non-completed surveys were deleted as per the Laurentian University Ethics Board agreement. The second round of recruiting was done on September 11th, 2018. At this time, the survey was promoted via Twitter, Facebook and Laurentian University Communication email. It was then re-promoted through these avenues on September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2018 and October 9th, 2018.

The survey was promoted twice to provide the most robust sample possible with a new group of students entering post-secondary education institutions in September. A target of 300 participants was set in order to do proper statistical analysis. The target population were students currently enrolled in a post-secondary institution and having gone to a high school in Ontario. Although Northern Ontario is the focus of this study, data was still collected from those having attended an Ontario high school other than those in Northern Ontario. Exclusion criteria of this study are those under the age of 18. Otherwise, all were invited to participate. However, for those

who did not go to high school in Ontario and those who are were currently registered in a post-secondary education, the survey ends after part I of the survey.

### 3.5 DATA ANALYSIS

This survey consisted of both questions in which participants chose the answer from a menu or open-ended questions that asked them to reflect on their situation and provide more detail. The SPSS (version 25.0 for MacBook) statistical software was used in order to analyze the quantitative data of this study. Descriptive statistics were used in order to get a better understanding of who participated in the study along with frequencies of their answers. Furthermore, univariate analysis of variance was also used in order to see if there were significant variables in certain answers as well as if there were significant interactions between sexuality, gender and location of the participants. Finally, a repeated measures ANOVA was used in order to compare the climate in high school physical education classes, school sports and community sports. Only eight individuals identified as outside of the traditional binary of gender, therefore, those who identified as trans were grouped with the gender with which they identified and those who identified as other than male, female, female to male trans, male to female trans, were not taken into account for the univariate analysis of variance; but were included in the descriptive statistics and open-ended questions. As for the open-ended questions, a content analysis was conducted in order to see what categories of experiences were present in the various questions. This analysis, who is used to analyze the pattern in various methods of communication helped to analyse the open-ended questions individually and not as a collective set of information in order to identify recurrent ideas within individual questions (Neuendorf, 2016). This was done by reading of the responses of the open-ended questions while looking for recurrent responses along with both interesting and meaningful comments. The open-ended questions were not

grouped in order to have a single analysis. Instead, every question was analyzed on an individual basis. All coding was done manually.

The use of both qualitative and quantitative data was used in order to give more richness to the data that was present. For example, asking participants if they had participated in school sports and for those who responded no, the follow up question was “why did you not participate in school sports”. This ensured that there were no assumptions on lack of participation. The qualitative comments thus added a voice to the study.

## Chapter 4

### 4. RESULTS

In most cases, the Levene's test for homogeneity was violated, this means that some of the groups compared were not of equal samples. This is likely due to unequal sampling sizes. A total of 492 individuals completed the online, retrospective survey. Of this number, 198 were excluded due to incomplete surveys resulting in a total of 294 participants whose data was analyzed. In total, 64.9% of the participants had attended high school in Northern Ontario as opposed to 32.7% in other regions of Ontario and 2.4% who did not attend high school in Ontario. The subdivision of participants in Northern Ontario included, 3.1% who attended high school in the Algoma District, 4.8% in the Cochrane district, 0% in the Kenora District, 0.3% in the Manitoulin District, 4.1% in the Nipissing District, 1.4% the Parry Sound District, 1.0% in the Rainy River district, 46.3% in the Sudbury District, 2.4% in the Thunder Bay district and 1.7% in the Timiskaming District. Most people attended high school in English (63.5%), 35.4% in French and 1% in French Immersion. The average age of the participants was 23.2 with the oldest participant being 53 years old, and the youngest being 18.

When looking at gender demographics, 48 participants identified as male, 205 identified as female, 1 person identified as male to female transgender, 3 people identified as female to male transgender, 2 said that none of the choices reflected their status or gender, and 2 participants checked other. This question, like others, was not mandatory and so there are some individuals who left it blank. Multiple gender labels were offered as options for the participants to select. Those who identified as male to female were grouped in the female category and those who identified as female to male were grouped in the male category in terms of gender analysis



seeing as there were not enough people who identified as transgender to do proper comparative analysis.

For this study, a total of 40.1% of participants did not identify as heterosexual with 5.4% of respondents identifying as gay, 6.8% as lesbian, 10.9% as bisexual, 3.4% as queer, 3.7% as questioning and 2.7% as other. For the purpose of this analysis, respondents were grouped into two broad categories: those who identified as heterosexual (59.9%); hereafter referred to as *Hetero*, and those who did not (40.1%); hereby referred to as *Non-Hetero*. This grouping allowed for more accurate comparisons between the two groups.

#### 4.1 WHAT IS THE ENVIRONMENT OF HOMOPHOBIA, BIPHOBIA AND TRANSPHOBIA (EXPERIENCES/WITNESSED) IN HIGH SCHOOL PHYSICAL EDUCATION CLASSES, SCHOOL SPORTS AND COMMUNITY SPORTS IN ONTARIO?

##### 4.1.1 PHYSICAL EDUCATION CLASSES

The Ontario Curriculum, as written by the Ministry of Education states that students must only obtain a single credit in health and physical education in high school (Ministry of Education, 2015). Participants were asked if they had participated in physical education classes past 9th grade, meaning that they participated in more classes than the mandatory credit of physical education, 24.7% (n=63) said they did not.

When asked why they did not participate in physical education classes past grade 9, two main themes were found using a content analysis of the responses; internal barriers and external barriers. The category of internal barriers included participants not continuing with physical education classes past 9<sup>th</sup> grade due to lack of interest, enjoyment, desire, along with stating that it was not a requirement and so, other classes took priority over physical education. External barriers took two different forms. The first one being bullying, for example:

*“I took health and anatomy classes, but wasn’t interested in the physical attribute of the course due to such a high rate of bullying in my high school” (Heterosexual, woman, age 27)*

Furthermore, many expressed discomforts associated with their health and physical education class as a reason for not pursuing this class past the one mandatory credit. Sources of discomfort included not feeling as if their level of physical fitness, body image or, athletic abilities would fit the ‘ideal’ description of that required to be good in physical education class and, in consequence felt as if they would be judged.

*“I am an overweight person and have been my whole life. My teachers often discriminated me for that.” (Lesbian, woman, age 18)*

*“Phys ed made me feel uncomfortable with my self [sic] such as body image” (Heterosexual, woman)*

Some reported feelings of anxiety towards the class along with various levels of comfort with those of either the same gender as them, or of the opposite gender including various levels of comfort within the changeroom.

*“...Because physical education was gender segregated and I had no male friends. Because I was singled out for making other male students uncomfortable in the changerooms” (Queer, gay, man, age 23)*

Finally, although only brought up once, was the feeling of isolation and not seeing one’s self within the curriculum being taught as a reason to stop physical education classes after ninth grade.

*“I didn’t feel that the health curriculum accurately represented my lifestyle or values and I felt isolated because of my different sexual orientation” (Bisexual, questioning, woman, age 18)*

In total, 40.1% of participants in this survey identified as *Non-Hetero* and almost half of all participants did not know of any individuals that identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer and/or transgender in their high school physical education class.

Of the total respondents, 33.7% either strongly agreed (3.1%) or agreed (30.6%) that acts/actions of homophobic, biphobia and/or transphobia were more common in physical education classes than in other classes. 50.9% of respondents either disagreed (38.4%) or strongly disagreed (12.5%) with this statement and 15.3% did not know.

Of the total respondents, 44.3% either strongly agreed (11%) or agreed (33.3%) that acts/actions of homophobia, biphobia and/or transphobia were more common in physical education classes change rooms than in the class itself. 38.4% of respondents either disagreed (27.8%) or strongly disagreed (10.6%) with this statement, and 17.3% did not know.

A series of questions referring to acts and actions of homophobia, biophobia and transphobia were asked. These questions asked participants at what frequency they witnessed or were verbally harassed, physically harassed, socially excluded among others, based on sexuality or gender in high school physical education class. Table 3 refers to the frequencies of these events. Most common events reported are based on referring to gender in a negative manner, in example, participants being told that they play like a girl.

**Table 3.** Frequencies of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic acts and actions in high school physical education classes.

	Never	Sometimes	Often	All the time
How often did you witness or have homophobic comments such as ‘that’s so gay’ directed at you in your physical education classes?	29.4%	45.5%	17.6%	7.5%
How often did you witness or have homophobic slurs like ‘faggot’, ‘dyke’ etc. directed at you in your physical education class?	51.4%	25.5%	17.6%	5.5%
How often did you have your (or witnessed) somebody have their masculinity or femininity called into question during your physical education class?	24.8%	42.9%	20.5%	11.9%
How often were you told that you ‘play like a girl’ or ‘throw like a girl’ or experience (or witnessed) other references to being feminine in a negative manner in your physical education class?	19.7%	32.3%	33.9%	14.2%
How often did you witness or were physically harassed based on sexuality, perceived sexuality, gender identity or gender expression in your physical education class?	66.9%	24.8%	7.5%	0.8%
How often did you witness or were physically assaulted based on sexuality, perceived sexuality, gender identity or gender expression in your physical education class?	83.1%	14.6%	2.4%	0%
How often did you witness or have property deliberately	90.2%	7.5%	2.0%	0.4%

stolen or damaged because of sexuality, perceived sexuality, gender identity or gender expression in your physical education class?

How often did you witness or was deliberately excluded from social groups because of sexuality, perceived sexuality, gender identity or gender expression in your physical education class?	63.8%	23.6%	8.7%	3.9%
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Of those who did witness, or were victims of homophobic, biphobic or transphobic attitudes/actions, 21.3% (n=54) of respondents said nobody ever stepped in, 37.8% (n=96) said respondents stepped in a couple times, 6.7% (n=17) often, 5.5% (n=14) all the time, and for 28.7% (n=73) of respondents, this question was not applicable. Table 4 shows the different way individuals identified in their high school physical education classes. Most participants either hid their sexuality or were still questioning their sexuality.

**Table 4.** Frequencies of how respondents identified in their physical education classes (this series of questions only appeared if participants identified as “other than” heterosexual and/or cis-gender)

How did you identify in your physical education classes	Responses
I identified as heterosexual	15.7% (N=13)
I hid my sexuality	33.7% (N=28)
My sexuality was implicitly known (my classmates knew but we didn’t talk about it)	9.6% (N=8)
My sexuality was publicly known (my classmates and people outside my class knew it)	13% (N=15.7%)
I was questioning my sexuality	25.3% (N=21)

According to a content analysis of the question, as to why they were open about their sexuality and/gender identity their physical education class the feeling was unanimous, all participants who filled out this question said that they did not feel as if it was something they needed to hide, and it just happened.

*“Didn’t really think much about coming out it just happened – Not planned” (Pansexual, questioning, woman, age 22)*

When asking who in the participants’ physical education classes knew their sexuality, 50.6% (n=42) of the participants said nobody knew of their sexuality, only the teacher knew for 1.2% (n=1) of participants, one or two classmates knew for 22.9% (n=19) of respondent’s, both the teacher and a couple of classmates knew for 4.8% (n=4) of respondents’ and finally, 20,5% (n=17) of participants reported that everybody knew including their teacher about their sexuality.

For those who were not out to anybody, 22.2% (n=18) reported that it was because they did not accept their own sexuality, 27.2% (n=22) did not feel the need to reveal their sexuality to others, 18.5% (n=15) did not think their classmates would accept them, 2.5% (n=2) feared discrimination for their teacher, 11.1% (n=9) did not identify as LGBTQ2-S in high school, 2.5% (n=2) named other reasons and for 16% (n=13) this question was not applicable. Some of the other reasons stated for not being out included not yet knowing one’s sexuality/still questioning along with the fear of family finding out if they came out in their high school physical education class. Interestingly, some stated that they did not want to come out because of not wanting to make others feel uncomfortable.

As for those who were out, either partially or completely, 3.8% (n=3) said the main reason they were out about their sexuality was because there was already another ‘out’ student in their class, 20.5% (n=16) were already ‘out’ with my friends before joining the class, 1.3% (n=1)

were inspired by their teacher(s) coming out, 1.3% (n=1) said their classmates denounced homophobic slurs and comments, 3.8% (n=3) said it was for other reasons, and for 69.2% (n=54) this question was not applicable. Some of the other reasons for being out included:

*“Did not have a choice.” (Gay, man, age 29)*

Additionally, when answering the question “Why did you choose to be partially out, not out, completely out etc. in your physical education class (benefits, challenges, problems, experiences etc.?)”, most who answered this question chose to not be out. For some, the reasoning was simply that they did not know or were still questioning their sexuality or that their sexuality was simply not an important part of their life in high school. For a large proportion of the respondents to this question though the fear of other perceptions due to previous experiences or lack of an LGBTQ2-S community in their school made them feel the need to stay closeted throughout high school. Some of the comments included:

*“‘Locker room talk.’, level of acceptance, from a very small town. Nobody else was openly gayv  
[sic]” (Gay, man, age 21)*

*“I was questioning my sexuality and heard too many times my friends and class mates talk about homosexual in a negative way that I wouldn’t have dared sharing how I felt.” (Bisexual, woman, age 35)*

Some indicated that it was specifically due to their physical education classes and sports that they did not feel safe to come out:

*“Because I played football, and it wasn’t “good for the team” as my coach put it. So, I hid it even though they suspected” (Gay, man)*

*Partially because I was afraid that it would become a problem with changing and physically intimate activities if people in the PE class knew... ” (Female to male transgender, questioning, age 29)*

*“...I also didn’t want girls to be cruel in the change room, accusing me of watching them change. They were already calling me a dyke. I didn’t want any more reason for them to bully me.” (Queer, woman, age 24)*

Finally, some did not come out in high school due to internalized homophobia.

Unfortunately, for some, a mixture of these themes was present and influenced their decision not to come out and some were outed instead of coming out:

*“Despite not being out until a year after Grade 9, everyone knew that I was gay and it was what fueled all of the bullying and harassment. I was young and still coming to terms with my sexuality when I was taking PE class. I was dealing with immeasurable amounts of shame regarding this aspect of myself. It’s obvious that I didn’t come out then because I was being told by everyone that my presumed identity was disgusting and something to be ashamed of. I feared for my safety. One look in the wrong direction in the changing room could go very badly. I was in survival mode... I feel like coming out in such an unsafe environment and such a vulnerable age would have only served as ammunition... Ultimately, there was no part of me at that age that was willing to risk it or saw it as a realistic possibility.” (Gay, queer, man, age 23)*

A small portion of the participants answering this question did however state that they were out because of different reasons including the self-acceptance of their identity, being in a supportive environment and having the desire to empower others:

*“I chose to be completely out not only in my Physical Ed class but in my entire school because I went to a french [sic] catholic high school where it was very taboo and I didn’t want to live like*



*that so I was trying to break carriers down for not only myself but my fellow LGBTQ+ classmates.” (Lesbian, woman, age 18)*

#### 4.1.2 SCHOOL SPORTS

As for school sports, of the 254 participants who answered this question, 70.9% participated in high school sports. Of this group, 142 identified as women and 35 identified as men.

Participants were asked why they did not participate in school sports in an open-ended question. Several themes were noted in these answers through a content analysis. The first theme, and notably the most common, was the lack of interest in sports, with many noting other past times. Some feared participation due to the fact that they felt as if they did not fit the ‘definition’ of an athlete. In consequence, there was the fear of not being accepted along with experiences of bullying.

*“Afraid of being judged for not being physically fit” (Questioning, female to male transgender, age 19)*

*“I felt like I did not match the standard of other athletes” (Bisexual, questioning, woman, age 19)*

*“I did not enjoy them and I felt like I would not be accepted” (Heterosexual, man, age 22)*

Finally, some expressed concerns due to gender and sexuality.

*“... I wasn’t good at any sports. I didn’t have any male friends. I was always picked last. I felt that I’d be a burden on any team. I was bullied for being presumed gay. I didn’t fit masculine expectations. I had no interest, for all the aforementioned reasons.” (Gay, queer, man, age 23)*

*“I didn’t want people to think I was a lesbian because of the stereotypes that were widespread.” (Lesbian, woman)*

Participants were then asked if they knew of individuals that identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer and/or transgender in their high school sports, 53.3% of individuals said yes. A series of questions were asked in order to see which environment, when compared to another setting, was more homophobic in school sports. Table 5 shows the level of agreeance of respondents to each statement. Change rooms had the highest rate of agreeance as being the most homophobic, biphobic and transphobic when compared to school sports.

**Table 5.** Frequency of acts/actions of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia in various settings.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	I don't know
Acts/actions of homophobia/biphobia/transphobia was more common in school sports than in classes	3.3% (N=6)	26.1% (N=47)	41.1% (N=74)	16.7% (N=30)	12.8% (N=23)
Acts/actions of homophobia/biphobia/transphobia was more common in school sports than in physical education class	3.3% (N=6)	18.9% (N=34)	47.2% (N=85)	15.6% (N=28)	15.0% (N=27)
Acts/actions of homophobia/biphobia/transphobia was more common in the change room than during the school sport	5.6% (N=10)	33.3% (N=60)	33.9% (N=61)	12.2% (N=22)	15.0% (N=27)

Furthermore, just like in physical education classes, a series of questions were asked to see the frequency of homophobic, biphobic and/or transphobic events in their high school sports as seen in table 6. There were high rates of homophobic slurs and participants stating that they were often told or witnessed somebody saying that they ‘play like a girl’.

**Table 6.** Frequencies of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic acts and actions in high school sports.

	Never	Sometimes	Often	All the time
How often did you witness or have homophobic comments such as ‘that’s so gay’ directed at your practices or school sporting events?	38.3%	39.4%	18.9%	3.3%
How often did you witness of have homophobic slurs like ‘faggot’, ‘dyke’ etc. directed at you in your practices or school sporting events?	52.8%	31.7%	10.6%	5.0%
How often did you have your (or witnessed somebody have their) masculinity or femininity called into question during your practices or school sporting events?	38.3%	38.9%	17.8%	5.0%
How often were you told that you ‘play like a girl’ or ‘throw like a girl’ or experience (or witnessed) other references to being feminine in a negative manner in your practices or school sporting events?	28.3%	43.9%	21.1%	6.7%
How often did you witness or were physically harassed based on sexuality, perceived sexuality, gender identity or gender expression in your practices or school sporting events?	77.8%	18.9%	3.3%	0%
How often did you witness or were physically assaulted based on sexuality, perceived sexuality, gender identity or gender expression in your practices or school sporting events?	85%	12.2%	2.8%	0%
How often did you witness or	90%	8.9%	1.1%	0%

have property deliberately stolen or damaged because of sexuality, perceived sexuality, gender identity or gender expression in your practices or school sporting events?

How often did you witness or was deliberately excluded from social groups because of sexuality, perceived sexuality, gender identity or gender expression in your practices or school sporting events?	69.4%	22.8%	7.2%	0.6%
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Participants who stated that they participated in school sports were asked in what school sports they participated. A list of school sport options was offered based on the school sports listed on the OFSAA website (Ontario Federation of School Athletics Association, 2018). Table 7 shows the frequency of school sports participation that the participants indicated with volleyball having the highest level of participation reported. Furthermore, table 8 indicates which women's school sports had the highest perceived levels of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia by respondents. Wrestling had the highest level of perceived homophobia, biphobia and transphobia in women's sports, followed by volleyball. Table 9 indicates the same thing, but for men's school sports, with once again, wrestling and volleyball having the highest perceived levels of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia.

**Table 7.** Frequencies of school sport participation.

<b>School Sport</b>	<b>Frequencies</b>
Badminton	2.20%
Baseball	0.60%
Basketball	2.80%
Cross Country Running	1.70%
Curling	0.60%
Football	2.80%
Gymnastic	1.70%
Hockey	1.70%
Soccer	6.10%
Swimming	3.90%
Tennis	1.10%
Track & Field	16.70%
Volley Ball	47.80%
Wrestling	3.30%
Other	7.20%

**Table 8.** Distribution of perception of most homophobic, biphobic and transphobic women's school sports.

<b>School Sport</b>	<b>Frequencies</b>
Basketball	0.60%
Field Hockey	0.60%
Football	1.80%
Gymnastic	0.60%
Hockey	7.40%
Rugby	5.50%
Soccer	3.70%
Swimming	5.50%
Tennis	1.80%
Track & Field	3.70%
Volley Ball	20.90%
Wrestling	47.90%

**Table 9.** Distribution of perception of most homophobic, biphobic and transphobic men's school sports.

School Sport	Frequencies
Basketball	4.00%
Football	3.30%
Golf	4.00%
Gymnastic	4.10%
Hockey	9.40%
Rugby	5.30%
Snowboarding	4.00%
Soccer	5.70%
Swimming	6.60%
Tennis	4.10%
Track & Field	1.60%
Volley Ball	9.80%
Wrestling	47.50%
Other	1.20%

When asked if participants avoided certain school sports because of fear of homophobia/biphobia/transphobia, 19.1% of participants said yes. Sports that were listed as being avoided by the participants include “all sports”, hockey, baseball, gymnastics, volleyball, badminton, basketball and, football.

Of those who did witness or were victims of homophobic, biphobic or transphobic attitudes/actions in their high school sports, 16.1% (n=29) of respondents said nobody ever stepped in, 36.1% (n=65) said respondents stepped in a couple times, 10% (n=18) often, 2.8% (n=5) all the time, and for 35% (n=63) of respondents, this question was not applicable.

For those who participated in school sports and currently identify as LGBTQ2-S, 25.5% identified as *Hetero*, 38.3% hid their sexuality, 8.5% said their sexuality was implicitly known, 4.3% said their sexuality was explicitly known, 10.6% said their sexuality was publicly known and 12.8% were still questioning their sexuality in school sports.

When asked whom in their school sports knew about their sexuality, 46.8% of participants said ‘nobody’, 2.10% said ‘only my teacher’, 21.3% said ‘only one or two class mates’, 4.30% said ‘my teacher and a couple of class mates’ and 25.5% said ‘everybody knew including my teacher’.

Participants were further asked why they did not display their sexuality to their team. 13.3% of participants they did not accept their own sexuality, 31.1% did not feel the need to reveal their sexuality to others, 15.6% did not think their team would accept them, 2.20% did not know, 11.1% did not identify as LGBTQ2-S in high school and, for 26.7% of participants, this question was not applicable.

On the contrary, there were those who were out about their sexuality to their teammates. Similar number of respondents (n=1) indicated they were out because there was already another ‘out’ athlete on their team, the team culture was open to diversity, their sport had an elite athlete publicly denouncing homophobic slurs and comments, and because of teammates denouncing homophobic slurs and comments or for other reasons unidentified. There was however, 20.0% that said that they were out because they were already out to their friends before joining the team, and finally, for 68.9% of participants, this question was not applicable.

When asked “Why did you choose to be partially out, not out, completely out etc. in your school sports (benefits, challenges, problems, experiences etc.)?”, most participants who answered said that they chose to not be out. Majority of respondents who weren’t out stated that it was due to fear of not being accepted, being seen differently, making others uncomfortable or out of fear of being bullied/harassed.

*“... I always hid my sexuality due to the fear of not being accepted” (Bisexual, woman, age 21)*

*“I did fear that there would be some unease, because we did traveling tournaments and had to stay in hotels; feared there would be the potential for drama or conflict if someone had to ‘room*

*with the gay chick’, or share a hotel bed” (Lesbian, woman)*

*“... cause I was worried that they would treat or look at me differently than if I was a straight athlete” (Questioning, woman, age 18)*

*“Didnt [sic] see the point of making myself a target for potential bullying or harrassment [sic]” (Bisexual, woman, age 20)*

*“There was something about sports teams that just made people completely drop the social tabbos [sic] of not saying homophobic and transphobic things right to your face” (Gay, bisexual, female to male transgender, male, age 19)*

Furthermore, some did not come out due to internal homophobia or because they did not see the need to come out/ identified as *Non-Hetero* at the time.

*“Didn’t accept myself” (Lesbian, woman, age 21)*

*“My sexuality doesn’t affect my performance” (Lesbian, woman)*

*“I didn’t think about my sexuality in highschool, didn’t really occur to me until university” (Gay, lesbian, woman)*

Finally, for those who were out, most came out before they joined the team and so others already knew. Some did suffer negative consequences because of being out.

*“I was already out in the ninth grade. I had a girlfriend during highschool. Changes rooms were an issue with people worried I would check them out and people got angry and retaliated.”*

*(Lesbian, woman, age 18)*



#### 4.1.3 COMMUNITY SPORTS

As for community sports, participants were asked if they participated in community/organized sports while in high school. Of the 254 individuals that answered this question, 56.7% said they did participate in community/organized sports.

Of those who did not participate most stated that it was due to a general lack of interest, lack of time or lack of financial means.

*“I didn’t have the time to play other sports while already playing high school sports. Along with having a job and doing school work. I didn’t have the time.” (Questioning, woman, age 18)*

*“I don’t find sports interesting or fun to me personally” (Heterosexual, woman, age 22)*

Furthermore, another theme present was the concept of not being good enough, or not being physically fit enough to play sports. This type of discourse going around the idea of not fitting the “ideal” definition of an athlete.

*“...wasn’t fit enough to join teams” (Heterosexual, woman, age 18)*

*“I did not match what the other athletes had” (Bisexual, questioning, woman, age 18)*

*“I wasn’t good enough” (Heterosexual, woman, age 18)*

Just like for school sports, there were also barriers stemming from mental health and body perception issues.

*“Didn’t like sports because of issues with body image and mental health” (Queer, woman, age 24)*

*“I had severe anxiety and identity issues as well as body issues so I avoided sports” (Bisexual, woman, age 29)*

Finally, the theme of negative past experiences mixed with individuals expressing fear based on gender and sexuality.

*“Avoided organized sports especially if they required to get ready in the change room.” (Gay, man, age 21)*

*“I was not willing to risk more hurt that I was enduring in high school as a gay man” (Gay, man)*

*“Sports felt fundamentally toxic... soaked with hierarchy, heterosexism, racism, lookism, fatphobia and (problematic) gender division.” (Queer, pansexual, woman, age 23)*

*“I quit playing soccer when I was younger because some boys told me that I couldn’t keep up with them because I was a girl. My coach was upset and I still regret that moment today. I got back into running through Cross Country running at school, but refrained from playing soccer or any organized sport in my community.” (Heterosexual, woman, age 21)*

*“Was not allowed to play the sports interested in because they were not allowed for girls” (Heterosexual, woman, age 48)*

It is interesting to note that some participants indicated that there was simply no opportunity for community sports in their small communities.

Participants were further asked if they knew of individuals that identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer or transgender in their community/ organized sports, 41% (n=59) said they did. 59% (n=85) did not. Frequency statistics were done in order to see what proportion of individuals believed that acts/actions of homophobia/biphobia/transphobia were more common in community/organized sports than in the high school environment, in community/organized sports than in physical education classes and in change rooms than during the community/organized sports. Results of these frequencies can be found in table 10. Just like in school sports, change rooms had the highest rate of agreeance as being the most homophobic, biphobic and transphobic when compared to community sports.

**Table 10.** Frequency of acts/actions of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia in various settings.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	I don't know
Acts/actions of homophobia/biphobia/transphobia was more common in community/organized sports than in my high school environment	4.3% (N=6)	20.1% (N=29)	46.5% (N=67)	17.4% (N=25)	11.8% (N=17)
Acts/actions of homophobia/biphobia/transphobia was more common in community/organized sports in physical education classes	4.9% (N=7)	18.8% (N=27)	44.4% (N=64)	19.4% (N=28)	12.5% (N=18)
Acts/actions of homophobia/biphobia/transphobia was more common in the change room than during the community/organized sports	4.9% (N=7)	27.8% (N=40)	38.2% (N=55)	12.5% (N=18)	16.7% (N=24)

Furthermore, a series of questions were asked to see the frequency of homophobic, biphobic and/or transphobic events in their community sports as seen in table 11. There were high rates of individuals reporting their gender being referenced in a negative way, and participants stating that they were often told or witnessed somebody saying that they ‘play like a girl’.

**Table 11.** Frequencies of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic acts and actions in community sports.

	Never	Sometimes	Often	All the time
How often did you witness or have homophobic comments such as ‘that’s so gay’ directed at your practices or community/organized sports?	44.4%	35.4%	13.2%	6.9%
How often did you witness of have homophobic slurs like ‘faggot’, ‘dyke’ etc. directed at you in your practices or community/organized sports?	53.5%	27.8%	12.5%	6.3%
How often did you have your (or witnessed somebody have their) masculinity or femininity called into question during your practices or community/organized sports?	43.1%	29.9%	20.8%	20.8%
How often were you told that you ‘play like a girl’ or ‘throw like a girl’ or experience (or witnessed) other references to being feminine in a negative manner in your practices or community/organized sports?	34%	36.8%	19.4%	9.7%
How often did you witness or were physically harassed based on sexuality, perceived sexuality, gender identity or gender expression in your practices or community/organized sports?	79.9%	17.4%	2.1%	0.7%
How often did you witness or were physically assaulted based on sexuality, perceived sexuality, gender identity or gender expression in your practices or community/organized sports?	86.8%	11.1%	2.1%	0%
How often did you witness or	90.3%	7.6%	1.4%	0.7%

have property deliberately stolen or damaged because of sexuality, perceived sexuality, gender identity or gender expression in your practices or community/organized sports?

How often did you witness or was deliberately excluded from social groups because of sexuality, perceived sexuality, gender identity or gender expression in your practices or community/organized sports?	75%	20.1%	4.2%	0.7%
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Participants were asked in which community sport they participated. Table 12 indicates the frequency of each sport played by respondents with soccer having the highest rate of participation. They were also asked, in their perception, which women's (Table 13) and men's (Table 14) community sports had the highest levels of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia. Weight lifting and volley ball had the highest reported levels in women's sports versus weight lifting and hockey in men's community sports.

**Table 12.** Frequencies of school sport participation.

Community Sport	Frequencies
Baseball	0.07%
Basketball	2.10%
Cycling	0.07%
Figure Skating	2.10%
Gymnastic	1.40%
Ice Hockey	9.70%
Karate	1.40%
Lacrosse	0.07%
Ringette	1.40%
Rowing	2.10%
Snowboard	1.40%
Soccer	22.90%
Softball	4.20%
Speed Skating	0.07%
Squash	0.07%

Swimming	11.1%
Table Tennis	1.40%
Volley Ball	16.0%
Water Ski	2.80%
Weight Lifting	3.50%
Other	13.20%

**Table 13.** Distribution of perception of most homophobic, biphobic and transphobic women's community sports.

School Sport	Frequencies
Basketball	0.08%
Boxing	0.08%
Cricket	0.08%
Figure Skating	1.60%
Golf	0.08%
Gymnastic	3.90%
Ice Hockey	6.30%
Lacrosse	0.08%
Racquetball	0.08%
Ringette	2.40%
Rowing	0.08%
Rugby	7.10%
Snowboard	0.08%
Soccer	7.90%
Softball	4.70%
Speed Skating	0.08%
Swimming	1.60%
Synchronized Swimming	7.10%
Table Tennis	0.08%
Volley Ball	16.50%
Water polo	3.10%
Weight lifting	28.80%
Wheelchair rugby	2.40%
Other	0.08%

**Table 14.** Distribution of perception of most homophobic, biphobic and transphobic men's community sports.

Community Sport	Frequencies
Baseball	0.04%
Basketball	0.04%
Curling	0.04%
Figure Skating	0.09%
Football	4.30%
Grass Hockey	0.09%
Gymnastic	0.09%
Horse Racing	0.09%
Ice Hockey	11.10%
Karate	1.30%
Lacrosse	3.00%
Ringette	1.30%
Rowing	0.04%
Rugby	5.50%
Snowboard	1.30%
Soccer	6.80%
Softball	0.09%
Speed Skating	0.09%
Squash	0.04%
Swimming	2.60%
Synchronized swimming	10.60%
Table Tennis	1.70%
Triathlon	2.10%
Volley Ball	7.20%
Water polo	5.10%
Water Ski	0.09%
Weight Lifting	20.90%
Wheelchair Basketball	1.30%
Wheelchair Rugby	4.30%
Other	1.70%

Of those who did witness, or were victims of homophobic, biphobic or transphobic attitudes/actions, 22.4% (n=32) indicated that bystanders never stepped in or rarely stepped in 25.2% (n=36) to stop the incidents. Respondents also indicated that bystanders stepped in a few times, 9.1% (n=13); often, 2.1% (n=3); or all the time. There was 41.3% (n=59) of respondents who indicated that this question was not applicable possibly implying that they were not a

witness nor a victim of homophobic, biphobic or transphobic attitudes/actions. When asked who stepped in, most said it was coaches (n= 15), followed by peers/teammates (n=11), the individuals themselves (n= 9), friends and parents (n=6), other LGBTQ2-S athletes and spectators (n= 2).

A total of 4.2% of those who participated in community/organized sports said that they did avoid a certain sport due to fear of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia. When asked what sport they avoided wrestling, hockey, basketball, football, badminton, swimming, volleyball and ‘most team sports’ were listed.

For those who participated in community/organized sports and currently identify as LGBTQ2-S, 21.2% identified as *Hetero*, 33.3% hid their sexuality, 9.1% said their sexuality was implicitly known, 6.1% said their sexuality was explicitly known, 12.1% said their sexuality was publicly known and 18.2% were still questioning their sexuality in community/organized sports while they were in high school. When asked whom in their community sports knew about their sexuality, 57.60% of participants said ‘nobody’, 12.10% said ‘one or two teammates but not my coach’, 0.03% said ‘my coach and a couple of teammates and 3.10% said ‘everybody on my team (including coach)’.

Participant were further asked why they did not display their sexuality to their team. For 26.7% of the participants they did not accept their own sexuality, 36.7% did not feel the need to reveal their sexuality to others, 10.0% did not think their team would accept them, 3.30% feared discrimination from their coaches and officials, 2.20% did not know, 13.30% did not identify as LGBTQ2-S in high school and, for 20.0% of participants, this question was not applicable.

On the contrary, there were those who were out about their sexuality to their teammates. For 20.0% this was because they were already out to their friends before joining the team. For



3.30% (n=1) of out participants this was because there was already another 'out' athlete on their team, the team culture was open to diversity, because of teammates denouncing homophobic slurs and comments and for 'other' reasons. For 66.70% of participants, this question was not applicable to them.

When asked "Why did you choose to be partially out, not out, completely out etc. in your community/organized sport (benefits, challenges, problems, experiences etc.)?" most stated that they were not out at all. In fact, some stated that they were not out because of concerns for their safety and other people's opinions.

*"Certain members are older and a lot bigger than I am who have very certain religious beliefs. I was looking out for my safety" (Lesbian, woman, age 19)*

*"Didn't think I would be accepted" (Lesbian, woman, age 21)*

Others were still questioning their sexuality or did not feel the need to talk about sexuality in their sporting environment.

*"We didn't speak about sexuality" (Questioning, grey asexual, bisexual, woman, age 19)*

*"I wasn't sure about it at the time" (Bisexual, woman, age 21)*

There was one comment of a positive coming out story in community sport that is noteworthy.

*"I felt safer disclosing my sexuality to these people. Figure skating is already a pretty flamboyant sport that it was no surprise to others when I did come out. It helped cultivate a sense of authenticity and gave me permission to have fun with choreography and felt like I didn't have to conform to ideals of masculinity. In this context, I was celebrated for my creativity and the ways in which I liked to move my body. When I started coaching figure skating, I got a few comments from a colleague suggesting that I shouldn't disclose my sexuality to everyone for fear that some parents of skaters might not want to hire me because I'm gay. I vehemently disagreed*

*and chose to be completely out. I don't feel like being out in this context had many challenges. I fulfilled the gay figure skater stereotype which was kind of annoying. But, I was ultimately accepted and valued for the skills and self-expression I had to offer. It was a complete contrast to the environment I was experiencing at school. Actually, these were the first people I told when I started coming out.” (Gay, queer, man, age 23)*

#### 4.2 DOES THE EXPERIENCE OF HOMOPHOBIA, BIPHOBIA AND TRANSPHOBIA DIFFER BY SPORT CONTEXT?

Multiple questions were asked to assess the frequency of homophobic, biphobic and/or transphobic events of actions in the three sport related contexts: physical education classes, school sports and community sports. A one-way repeated measure analysis of variance was conducted in order to compare the homophobic events in high school physical education classes, school sports and community sports.

Participants were first asked to rate, on a scale of ‘never’, ‘sometimes’, ‘often’ and ‘all the time’, how often they witnessed or had homophobic comments such as ‘that’s so gay’ directed at them in each of the three sport settings. The results of the Anova show a significant location effect, Wilks’ Lambda= .903,  $F(2, 128) = 6.863$ ,  $p=.001$ . In order to see where the differences in locations were, a Bonferroni post-hoc test was conducted to make post-hoc comparisons between physical education classes, school sports and community sports. This revealed a significant difference in homophobic comments ( $p=.006$ ) between both physical education classes ( $M= 2.07$ ,  $SD= .837$ ) and school sports ( $M= 1.85$ ,  $SD= .782$ ) and between physical education classes ( $M= 2.07$ ,  $SD= .837$ ) and community sports ( $M= 1.85$ ,  $SD= .919$ ) ( $p=.004$ ). Thus, indicating significantly more homophobic comments occurred in physical education classes than the other two settings.

Using the same scale, the following question asked participants how often they had witnessed or had homophobic slurs like ‘faggot’, ‘dyke’ etc. directed at them in their high physical education classes, school sports and community sports settings. The results of the Anova show a significant location effect, Wilks’ Lambda= .942,  $F(2, 128) = 3.917$ ,  $p=.022$ . In order to see where the differences in locations were, the Bonferroni post-hoc test was conducted in order to make post-hoc comparisons between physical education classes, school sports and community sports. This revealed a significant difference in homophobic slurs ( $p=.018$ ) between physical education classes ( $M= 1.85$ ,  $SD= .888$ ) and school sports ( $M= 1.66$ ,  $SD= .882$ ) with more homophobic slurs being heard in physical education classes than school sports.

The third question using the same scale asked participants how often they had their (or witnessed somebody have their) masculinity or femininity called into question in the three sport settings. The results of the Anova show a significant location effect, Wilks’ Lambda= .883,  $F(2, 128) = 8.440$ ,  $p=.000$ . In order to see where the differences in locations were, the Bonferroni post-hoc test was conducted to make post-hoc comparisons between physical education classes, school sports and community sports. This revealed a significant difference in respondents having their femininity or masculinity called into question ( $p=.000$ ) between both physical education classes ( $M= 2.25$ ,  $SD= .890$ ) and school sports ( $M= 1.90$ ,  $SD= .861$ ) and between physical education classes ( $M= 2.25$ ,  $SD= .890$ ) and community sports ( $M= 1.95$ ,  $SD= .947$ ) ( $p=.006$ ). Thus, significantly more individuals reported having (or witnessed somebody have their) masculinity or femininity called into question in their high school physical education classes than in school sports or community sports settings.

The next question asked participants how often they were told that they ‘play like a girl’ or ‘throw like a girl’ or experienced (or witnessed) other references to being feminine in a

negative manner in the three sports settings. The results of the Anova show a significant location effect, Wilks' Lambda = .858,  $F(2, 128) = 10.565$ ,  $p = .000$ . In order to see where the differences in locations were, the Bonferroni post-hoc test was conducted in order to make post-hoc comparisons between physical education classes, school sports and community sports. This revealed a significant difference in respondents being referred to being feminine in a negative manner ( $p = .000$ ) between both physical education classes ( $M = 2.38$ ,  $SD = .917$ ) and school sports ( $M = 2.04$ ,  $SD = .884$ ) and between physical education classes ( $M = 2.38$ ,  $SD = .917$ ) and community sports ( $M = 2.08$ ,  $SD = .973$ ) ( $p = .002$ ). Thus, significantly more individuals reported having (or witnessed somebody being) been referred to as feminine in a negative manner in high school physical education classes.

Furthermore, using the same 4 options scale as noted above the next question asked participants how often they witnessed or were physically harassed based on sexuality, perceived sexuality, gender identity or gender expression in their high physical education classes, school sports and community sport settings. The results of the Anova show a significant location effect, Wilks' Lambda = .940,  $F(2, 128) = 4.091$ ,  $p = .019$ . In order to see where the differences in locations was, the Bonferroni post-hoc test was conducted in order to make post-hoc comparisons between physical education classes, school sports and community sports. This revealed a significant difference in physical harassment based on sexuality, perceived sexuality, gender identity or gender expression ( $p = .015$ ) between both physical education classes ( $M = 1.38$ ,  $SD = .640$ ) and school sports ( $M = 1.23$ ,  $SD = .458$ ), and between physical education classes ( $M = 1.38$ ,  $SD = .640$ ) and community sports ( $M = 1.26$ ,  $SD = .536$ ) ( $p = .046$ ). These results indicate that significantly more individuals witnessed or were physically harassed based on

sexuality, perceived sexuality, gender identity or gender expression in their high physical education classes than in either school sports or community sports.

The following question using the same scale asked participants how often they witnessed or were physically assaulted based on sexuality, perceived sexuality, gender identity or gender expression in their high physical education classes, school sports and community sports settings? The results of the Anova did not show a significant location effect, Wilks' Lambda= .959,  $F(2, 128) = 2.738$ ,  $p=.068$ .

Again, using the same scale, the next question asked participants how often they witnessed or had property deliberately stolen or damaged because of sexuality, perceived sexuality, gender identity or gender expression in their high school physical education classes, school sports and community sports settings. The results of the Anova did not show a significant location effect, Wilks' Lambda= .987,  $F(2, 128) = .820$ ,  $p=.443$ .

The last question using the same 4 option scale asked participants how often they witnessed or were deliberately excluded from social groups because of sexuality, perceived sexuality, gender identity or gender expression in their high school physical education classes, school sports and community sports settings. The results of the Anova did not show a significant location effect, Wilks' Lambda= .958,  $F(2, 128) = 2.795$ ,  $p=.065$ .

The one-way repeated measure analyses of variance results indicate that when there was a significant difference between physical education classes, school sports and community sports, the experience of negative events were always higher in physical education classes. Therefore, the results indicate that between these three settings, physical education classes were reported as having the most homophobic climate.

#### 4.3 DOES THE EXPERIENCE OF HOMOPHOBIA, BIPHOBIA AND TRANSPHOBIA DIFFER BASED ON SEXUALITY?

In the beginning of the survey, participants were asked if they participated in physical education classes past grade 9, with most indicating that they did participate (75.3%). For respondents who indicated “no” they did not participate in physical education classes past grade 9, the next question they were asked was an open-ended question asking why they decided not to do so. Although sexuality did not come as a significant variable of lack of participation, there were comments that eluded to it.

*“I didn’t feel that the health curriculum accurately represented my lifestyle of values and I felt isolated because of my difference sexual orientation” (Bisexual, questioning, woman, age 18)*

The same can be said about participation in community sports.

*“I was not willing to risk more hurt than I was enduring in a high school as a gay man” (Gay, man)*

Participants were asked if they agreed or disagreed with the statement that acts/actions of homophobia, biphobia and/or transphobia were more common in the change rooms for physical education classes than in the class setting itself. *Non-Hetero* (M=2.450) had a higher tendency to agree to this statement than *Hetero* (M=3.207) ( $F(1, 242) = 4.884, p=.028$ ). This was further reflected in the open-ended question of “Why did you choose to be partially out, not out, completely out etc. in your physical education class?”

*“‘Locker room talk.’, level of acceptance, from a very small town. Nobody else was openly gayv [sic].” (Gay, man age 21)*

*“Partially because I was afraid that it would become a problem with changing...”*

*“... I also didn’t want girls to be cruel in the change room, accusing me of watching them change...” (Female to male transgender, questioning, age 29)*

Although *Non-hetero* participants agreed to the above statement, they also had a high level of agreement (6% strongly agree and 34% agree) with the statement “Acts/actions of homophobia/biphobia/transphobia were more common in school sports than in physical education class”. Again, those identifying as *Non-hetero* ( $M=2.667$ ) having a higher rate of agreeance than *Hetero* participants ( $M=3.388$ ) ( $F(1, 169)= 5.883, p=.016$ ).

In addition, sexuality was a significant variable to the question “How often were you told that you ‘play like a girl’, or ‘throw like a girl’ or experience (or witnessed) other references to being feminine in a negative manner in your physical education class?” In fact, *Non-Hetero* ( $M=2.841$ ) had the highest reporting rate of this event when compared to *Hetero* ( $M=2.059$ ) ( $F(1, 242) = 8.769, p= .003$ ).

For the results provided by respondents when asked “how often did you witness or were you deliberately excluded from social groups because of sexuality, perceived sexuality, gender identity or gender expression in your physical education class” sexuality was a significant predictor. *Non-hetero* reported higher frequency of this event versus *Hetero*. This was also the case in school sports and more specifically, *Non-hetero* having attended high school in Northern Ontario having an even higher level of agreement ( $M=1.789$ ) versus *Hetero* ( $M=1.287$ ) ( $F(1, 242)= 5.700, p= .018$ ).

Of respondents who did witness or were victims of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic comments or actions in their high school sports, *Non-Hetero* respondents in Northern Ontario had the lowest rate of reporting for people stepping into help ( $M=1.927$ ) followed by *Hetero* in northern Ontario ( $M=2.861$ ) and in other Ontario regions ( $M=3.487$ ) and finally *Non-hetero* in other Ontario regions ( $M=4.333$ ).

Taking all of these results into consideration, it is therefore not unexpected that sexuality is a significant variable in respondents' self-reported of current levels of physical activity and sports participation. *Non-Hetero* respondents in Northern Ontario reported the lowest rate of participation ( $M=2.526$ ). *Non-Hetero* in other regions of Ontario do have the highest self-reported levels of their physical activity and sports participation ( $M=1.29$ ) above *Hetero* in Northern Ontario ( $M=1.957$ ) and in other Ontario regions ( $M=1.972$ ) ( $F(1,242)=3.775$ ,  $p=.053$ ). Some reasons reported for having low self-reported levels of physical activity and sports participation include:

*"I feel wildly uncomfortable in change rooms, because of the stereotypes that have been put on gay people in the change rooms (perverts, always looking at you undress etc.) that I just don't go to the gyms in general because I don't want to make anyone feel creeped out; even though they don't know me"* (Woman, Lesbian, age, 18)

*"I have learned that some people will judge a persons ability to be good a sport based on there [sic] sexuality..."* (Heterosexual, woman, age 24)

Although there are some homophobic, biphobic and transphobic events this might not capture the entire experience of individuals. When asked if people were out about their sexuality in physical education classes, school sports and community sports, most were not out about their sexuality (15.7% of *Non-Hetero* identified as heterosexual during these classes and 33.7% of *Non-Hetero* hid their sexuality in physical education classes). When considering all respondent, this illustrates that 50.6% of participants stated that nobody knew about their sexuality with 18.5% stating that it was because they did not think their classmates would accept them. Specific reasons reported for not being out included:



*“I was questioning my sexuality and heard too many times my friends and class mates talk about homosexual in a negative way that I wouldn’t have dated sharing how I felt” (Bisexual, woman, age 35)*

*“Because I played football, and it wasn’t “good for the team” as my coach put it. So, I hid it even though they suspected” (Gay, man)*

Furthermore, 46.8% of *Non-Hetero* respondents stated that nobody in their school sports knew about their sexuality with 15.6% of people stating that they did not believe that they would be accepted. Specific reasons for not being out include:

*“... I always hid my sexuality due to the fear of not being accepted” (Bisexual, woman, age 21)*

*“I did fear that there would be some unease, because we did traveling tournaments and had to stay in hotels; feared there would be the potential for drama or conflict if someone had to ‘room with the gay chick’, or share a hotel bed” (Lesbian, Woman)*

*“... cause I was worried that they would treat or look at me differently than if I was a straight athlete” (Questioning, woman, age 18)*

*“Didn’t see the point of making myself a target for potential bullying or harrassment” (Bisexual, woman, age 20)*

*“There was something about sports teams that just made people completely drop the social tabbos of not saying homophobic and transphobic things right to your face” (Gay, bisexual, female to male transgender, male, age 19)*

Finally, 21.2% of respondents in community sports during high school identified as heterosexual and 33.3% of them hid their sexuality with 57.6% of respondents stating the nobody on their team knew about their sexuality. Specific reasons included:

*“Certain members are older and a lot bigger than I am who have very certain religious beliefs. I was looking out for my safety” (Lesbian, woman, age 19)*

*“Didn’t think I would be accepted” (Lesbian, woman, age 21)*

For these reasons, it can be hypothesized that the entire picture of the state of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia in these settings cannot be fully painted seeing as some may not act on their homophobic/biphobic/transphobic beliefs if nobody around identifies as LGBTQ2-S.

#### 4.4 DOES THE EXPERIENCE OF HOMOPHOBIA, BIPHOBIA AND TRANSPHOBIA DIFFER BASED ON GENDER AND GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION?

Several questions were analyzed to see if gender and location, as a variance and co-variance, were significant in the way participants responded to the questions. This was the case in some situations. When asking participants “how often did you witness homophobic slurs like ‘faggot’, ‘dyke’ etc. directed at you in your physical education class?” there was a higher proportion of participants having attended high school in Northern Ontario ( $M=2.002$ ) that reported higher frequency of these events compared to those having gone to high school in other Ontario regions ( $M=1.529$ ) ( $F(1, 242)= 3.791, p=.053$ ). Furthermore, gender and location were significant covariates. In fact, men who lived in Northern Ontario had the highest rate of reporting of this event ( $M=2.281$ ) followed by women in other Ontario regions ( $M= 1.835$ ), women in Northern Ontario ( $M= 1.763$ ) and men in other Ontario regions ( $M=1.222$ ) ( $F(1,229)= 4.986, p=.026$ ).

Participants were asked “How often did you witness or was deliberately excluded from social groups because of sexuality, perceived sexuality, gender identity or gender expression in your physical education class?”. Participants having attended high school in Northern Ontario

reported a higher frequency of this event ( $M=1.748$ ) when compared to those having attended high school in other Ontario regions ( $M=1.328$ ) ( $F(1, 242)= 5.7000$ ,  $p= .018$ ). This was also the case in school sports with not only those in Northern Ontario ( $M=1.789$ ) reporting higher rates of exclusion than other Ontario regions ( $M=1.140$ ) ( $F(1,169) = 14.135$ ,  $p=.000$ ) but, for school sports specifically, men in Northern Ontario ( $M=2.075$ ) ( $F(1,169)=4.583$ ,  $p=.034$ ) and *Non-Hetero* in Northern Ontario having higher rates ( $M=2.277$ ) ( $F(1,169) =9.924$ ),  $p=.002$ ). Similarly, this was also the case in community sports with those having attended high school in Northern Ontario ( $M=1.562$ ) experiencing this event at a higher frequency than those in other Ontario regions ( $M=1.144$ ) ( $F(1,134)=4.969$ ,  $p=.027$ ). Participants were also asked “How often did you witness or were deliberately excluded from social groups because of sexuality, perceived sexuality, gender identity or gender expression, gender was a significant variable with men in Northern Ontario reporting the highest rate of this exclusion ( $M=2.075$ ) followed by women in northern Ontario ( $M=1.504$ ), women in other Ontario regions ( $M=1.224$ ) followed by men in other Ontario regions ( $M=1.056$ ) ( $F(1,169)=4.583$ ,  $p=.034$ ).

Furthermore, the participants that responded to the statement “Acts/actions of homophobia, biphobia and/or transphobia were more common in school sports than in classes” had a higher rate of agreeance if they had attended high school in Northern Ontario ( $M= 2.668$ ) than other Ontario regions ( $M=3.287$ ) ( $F(1,169)= 4.146$ ,  $p=.043$ ).

When asking participants if anyone stepped in when homophobic, biphobic or transphobic attitudes/actions happened in high school physical education classes, location was a significant factor. Gender and location were also significant covariates. Those having attended high school in Northern Ontario ( $M=2.447$ ) stated more often than those in other Ontario regions ( $M=3.528$ ) ( $F(1, 242) = 6.240$ ,  $p=.013$ ) that nobody in their surroundings stepped in. Once

again, men having attended high school in Northern Ontario reported the lowest rate of individuals stepping in ( $M = 2.195$ ) ( $F(1, 242) = 4.765, p = .030$ ). The same can be said for school sports with once again, those having attended high school in Northern Ontario ( $M = 2.394$ ) having the lowest reported rates of people stepping when compared to other Ontario regions ( $M = 3.910$ ). In this case however, *Non-Hetero* participants that went to high school in Northern Ontario had the lowest reported rate of people stepping in ( $M = 1.927$ ) ( $F(1, 169) = 3.712, p = .056$ ). This was also the case in community sports with those having attended high school in Northern Ontario having lower rates of people stepping in ( $M = 2.534$ ) versus those having attended high school in other Ontario regions ( $M = 3.761$ ) ( $F(1, 133) = 5.178, p = .024$ ).

Participants were also asked if they knew of individuals that identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer and/or transgender in their high school sports. Gender was a significant variable with women ( $M = 1.433$ ) knowing more people who identified in their high school sports than men ( $M = 1.690$ ) ( $F(1, 173) = 6.374, p = .012$ ).

Based on the higher frequency of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic events in Northern Ontario, it is not surprising that participants in Northern Ontario have a lower self-reported level of their current physical activity. More specifically, men ( $M = 2.238$ ) and women ( $M = 2.245$ ) in having attended high school in Northern Ontario have lower levels than men in other Ontario regions ( $M = 1.444$ ), but still higher levels than women in other Ontario regions ( $M = 2.256$ ) ( $F(1, 242) = 3.723, p = .055$ ).

When considering participation in community sports, men in other than Northern Ontario regions had the highest rate of participation ( $M = 1.056$ ) followed by women in Northern Ontario ( $M = 1.455$ ), women in other Ontario regions ( $M = 1.494$ ) followed by men in Northern Ontario ( $M = 1.567$ ) ( $F(1, 242) = 3.949, p = .048$ ). But, when asked who in community sports knew of

individuals that identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer or transgender, there was, just like in school sports, more women who knew of individuals ( $M= 1.535$ ) than men ( $M=1.797$ ) ( $F(1,142) = 1.330, p=.018$ ). Despite this increased presence of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic conditions for men, they still reported higher current self-reported levels of physical activity ( $M=1.841$ ) than women ( $M=2.251$ ) ( $F(1,242)= 3.845, p=.051$ ).

#### 4.5 DOES EXPERIENCE OF HOMOPHOBIA, BIPHOBIA AND TRANSPHOBIA IN HIGH SCHOOL PHYSICAL EDUCATION CLASSES, SCHOOL SPORTS AND COMMUNITY SPORTS IMPACT FUTURE SPORTS AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PARTICIPATION?

Current levels of physical activity and sports participation as post-secondary students varied. The average amount of physical activity and sports participation a week reported by participants was 7.9 hours. Of respondents, 16.1% reported being ‘very physically active’, 55.9% reported being ‘moderately physically active’, 23.2% ‘poorly physically active’ and 4.7% indicating that they were not physically active.

*Non-Hetero* respondents in other Ontario regions had the highest of participation ( $M=1.729$ ) followed by *Hetero* participants in Northern Ontario ( $M=1.957$ ) and other Ontario regions ( $M=1.972$ ) and finally *Non-hetero* that went to high school in Northern Ontario have the lowest current self-reported rate of their physical activity ( $M=2.526$ ) ( $F(1,242)=3.775, p=.053$ ). The most frequent types of physical activity that participants reported they currently engaged in included going to the gym/lifting weights; running, walking; volleyball; hiking and biking.

Finally, participants were asked if their high school had any anti-homophobic policies or plans in place to counter homophobia, biphobia and transphobia. In all, 33,1% of participants stated that their high school did have something in place versus 66.9% of individuals stating that they did not.

The open-ended question “How has your experience in high school physical education classes affected your current state of physical activity?” revealed multiple themes. There were some individuals that stated that their experience in high school nor encouraged or discouraged their current state of physical activity.

*“I don’t think it had many if any effects on my current state of physical activity”*

*“It has not really affected me much, I’ve never been overly interested in sports or physical activity and my high school experience has not influenced my interests” (Gay, lesbian, woman)*

Others stated that their positive experience in their high school physical class/classes encouraged them to pursue physical activity/ a healthy lifestyle in their post-secondary journey.

*“It has motivated me to continue to be active in order to stay healthy” (Heterosexual, woman, age 43)*

*“Made me want to stay active, and have me more resources to stay active” (Heterosexual, woman, age 19)*

Unfortunately, there are those whose negative experiences in regard to gender, sexuality, bullying, skill level, body shaming and judgement of peers made them abandon physical activity or shy away from group activities/sports.

*“High school peers were quite judgmental regarding performance, resulting in social anxiety surrounding exercise” (Heterosexual, woman, age 19)*

*“It made me afraid to participate in sports and eliminated any interest I had in sports. I felt nervous because I wasn’t as skilled as anyone else and that when I came out perhaps they would target me because of that.” (Gay, queer, man, age 23)*

*“Being bullied for being bigger made me not want to exercise in front of people” (Heterosexual, woman, age 23)*

*“I was physically taller and broader than most females and was made fun of accordingly . I shied away from muscular dominant sports and sports with little clothing because I was embarrassed to be difference. It took me a long time to adjust to my body and feel comfortable performing to my capacity.” (Heterosexual, woman, age 26)*

*“It negatively effected it. I feel like I would have been more active today if I had been in a more accepting environment (interms of gender and physical fitness then.)” (Female to male transgender, queer, age 19)*

*“I feel widly uncomfortable in change rooms, because of the stereotypes that have been put on gay people in the change rooms (percerts, always looking at you undress etc.) that I just don’t go to gyms in general because I don’t want to make anuyone feel creeped out; eve though they don’t know me” (Female to male transgender, questioning, age 18)*

*“Made me think that girls should bot be built a certain way, so I help off on working out harder than I would like.” (Bisexual, woman, age 20)*

*“I have learned that some people will judge a persons ability to be good a sport based on there sexuality.. Based on an individuals gender people will categorize what sports we should and should not play.” (Heterosexual, woman, age 24)*

Finally, there was those whose negative experiences in high school physical education class made them become more physically active for negative reasons.

*“Made me want to work out more, many negative body comments” (Heterosexual, man)*

A content analysis of the open-ended question “how has your experience in high school sports affected your current state of physical activity?” illustrated that many of the themes that were present in the answers to the previous question asking how their high school physical

education class had affected respondent's current state of physical activity were also found in answers to this question. The theme of not being affected by their high school sports was present:

*"I've owned my sexuality and my identity since high school, so any negative experiences I had as someone questioning their sexuality in high school have been long forgotten. I wish I could be more involved in organized sports again."* (Lesbian, woman)

Furthermore, there were those whose experience in high school sports inspired and encouraged them to keep going with physical activity or, made them wish they still had the time to do so:

*"It has allowed me to try sports in high school that I enjoyed and now continue to play out of high school"* (Heterosexual, woman)

*"High school sports made me appreciate the sport more and gave me an itch to play more during my spare time"* (Heterosexual, man, age 21)

*"Helped me learn what physical activity I enjoy and helped me stay fit as an adult."*  
(Heterosexual, woman, age 23)

There was also a large number of respondents indicating that their negative experiences, whether it be bullying, body shaming, lack of peer support, or lack of comfort in changerooms, led them to either not participate in physical activities, or switch which activities they participate in now.

*"I would have continued to play sports throughout my entire high school except that I was not comfortable in the change room."* (Gay, man, age 21)

*"It negatively effected it. I feel like I would have been more active today if I had been in a more accepting environment (in terms of gender and physical fitness) then."* (Questioning, female to male transgender, male, age 19)



*“I got bullied a lot so I’m afraid to work out now” (Bisexual, woman, age 21)*

*“...my negative high school sports experience was only due to social hierarchy cliques. Likely why I involve mostly in solitary fitness activities.” (Heterosexual, woman, age 23)*

*“It gave me a negative attitude towards being active.” (Lesbian, woman, age 20)*

A content analysis of the responses to the question “how has your experience in community sports affected your current state of physical activity?” illustrated that, like school sports, there were many respondents that indicated that their experience in community sports while in high school did not have an effect on their current sports participation or physical activity levels. Additionally, respondents indicated that they had a good experience in the community sports setting that motivated them to keep being active, provided personal growth and provided knowledge about their health.

*“Sports outside of school peaked my interests in multiple sports allowing me to remain active throughout my life up to now” (Heterosexual, man, age 21)*

*“I am currently physically active a lot through playing sports I played in my community growing up. I started sports so young and fell in love with the games and because of that, I continue to play them today, increasing my physical activity.” (Heterosexual, woman, age 20)*

*“When I took swimming lessons it kept me healthy and gave me a sense of accomplishment. So now when I swim I tend to feel happy overall.” (Heterosexual, woman, age 19)*

*“If it wasn’t for community organized sports I would have quit sports all together because highschool sports were so awful. In a way it made me feel worthless and was very degrading. Everyone compares you to other people but in organized sports we are all therefor a common cause and its more fin that way.” (Heterosexual, woman, age 23)*

Finally, there were participants whose experience made them not want to pursue physical activity or pursue it for the wrong reasons.

*“I originally quit swimming competitively because the team was very aggressive and not supportive or inclusive.” (Bisexual, woman, age 20)*

*“I won’t let my kids play competitive hockey if they are LGBTQ because I would be scared for them in its current state” (Heterosexual, man, age 19)*

*“It has made me more hesitant to try and join.” (Bisexual, female to male transgender, age 17)*

*“it makes me not want to participate with people who act homophobic” (Heterosexual, woman, age 20)*

*“Encouraged me to be more active, work out more to appear more masculine (internalized homophobia)” (Gay, man, age 34)*

At the beginning of the study, two research questions were asked, with the first one was ‘what is the environment of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia (experiences/witnessed) in high school physical education classes, school sports and community sports?’ Descriptive statistics were used in order to see the frequencies of such various experiences. This question was subdivided in 4 more categories including ‘does the experience of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia differ by sports context, sexuality, gender and/or geographical location?’. Through these questions, physical education classes were identified as being the most homophobic, those who did not identify as heterosexual, those who identified as men and those who went to high school in Northern Ontario reported increased homophobic experiences. The second research question was ‘Do rates of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia in high school physical education classes, school sports and community sports impact future sports and physical activity participation?’ Various responses were given, but there were in fact individuals who

were affected by negative past experiences and these experiences affects the way in which they participate in physical activity and sports in the present time. In the following section, the results will be situated within the current literature that exists internationally.

## Chapter 5

### 5. DISCUSSION

The following chapter will situate the results of this study within current literature. The environment in Ontario physical education classes, school sports and community sports to other studies will be compared. Furthermore, a review of the adverse conditions faced by individuals based upon sexuality and gender will be provided. Finally, the geographical findings and the effects of negative environments on future sport and physical activity participation will be discussed.

#### 5.1 PHYSICAL EDUCATION, SCHOOL SPORTS AND COMMUNITY SPORTS ENVIRONMENT

Studies have shown that there is a decrease in homophobia for both men and women who do not identify as heterosexual in sports (Anderson, 2002; Anderson and Bullingham, 2015); but this does not mean that levels of homophobia are not still present. It is such the case in Kosciw et al. (2016) report of school climate, physical education classes were the most avoided area within high schools. In this study, homophobia, biphobia and transphobia were still present at relatively high frequencies. For example, the frequency of participants responding that they had never heard the expression ‘that’s so gay’ in their high school physical education classes was only 29.4% versus 38.3% in school sports and 44.4% in community sports. The same trend of findings, although occurring at higher frequencies, was also reflected in a study conducted by Symons et al. (2014) in Australia.

When looking at physical harassment in high schools versus in physical education classes and school sports, more people reported having been physically harassed based on sexuality, perceived sexuality, gender expression or gender identity then in comparison to the study

conducted by Taylor et al. (2011). This means that there were more reported cases of physical harassment in this study's physical education and school sports environment, compared to Canadian high schools in general.

When it came to the level of 'outness' in physical education classes and school sports, there were more people being 'out to everyone' and less people being 'out to nobody' in this study then compared to the 2015 Out on the Field study (Denison et al., 2015). This was not the case however in the community sports setting of this study. Although there were less people being 'out to nobody', there was also less people being 'out to everybody' than compared to the Out on the Field study (Denison et al., 2015).

Although the reported rates of verbal harassment, physical harassment, social exclusion may not reflect the entire reality. In fact, 18.5% of participants in physical education classes, 15.6% in high school sports, and 10% of participants in community sports, stated that they were not 'out' to people in their class or on their team as a result of the fear of not being accepted by others. Therefore, until everyone feels safe to be out in these settings, the true true climate in these settings remains unknown.

To summarise, experiences of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia represented in this study are reflected in other studies such as Symons et al., study conducted in Australia (2014), the Canada wide Climate Survey done in high schools by Taylor et al., (2011) along with the International study done in 2015 by Denison et al.

## 5.2 PHYSICAL ACTIVITY SETTING

A series of identical questions were asked to participants in order to not only assess the climate in high school physical education classes, school sports and community sports, but also to compare these settings. When comparing the three settings, the results indicated a significant

difference between settings as respondent reported having a more negative environment in high school physical education classes versus school sports and community sports. In fact, rates of verbal harassment using homophobic language and slurs, sexism and physical harassment were all higher in physical education classes than the other settings. These results reflect the same findings from Symons et al. (2014) in which they also compared physical education classes with school sports and club-based sports (their term for community/ organized sports) where physical education classes had the highest level of homophobic attitudes and actions.

Although a single credit of physical education and health is mandatory in high school (Ministry of Education, 2015) there is no institutionally mandated participation in sports, it can thus be surmised that negative attitudes towards LGBTQ2-S individuals that are already present in high schools, as suggested by Taylor et al., 2011 and Kosciw et al., 2016, are being carried over in physical education classes. Not only is there a possible carrying over affect, but in a study comparing bullying and perpetration in sport teams, there were higher levels of adolescents reporting being bullied, or bullying others in schools versus in sports (Evans, Adler, MacDonald and Côté, 2016). These negative attitudes and actions may affect people more in physical education classes due to a lack of common student goals compared to school sports and community sports. Although homophobia is still present in these settings, it can be argued that individuals participating in sports all have the common value of sports participation thus minimizing other negative beliefs and values that players may have against other players based on various identities including sexuality. In most cases in this study, there were still slightly more elevated levels of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia actions and attitudes in school sports than in community sports, but this can also be the result of negative school climate being carried over to school sports. There is also a certain protective factor based on athletic capability

as shown by Anderson and Bullingham (2015), with athletes having higher athletic abilities reporting lower levels of homophobic actions. this could be a result as there may be a certain level of protection in school sports and community sports based on ‘needing’ the athlete for good team performance during competition. This feeling and ‘needing’ a person would not be the same in physical education classes due to its educational nature as opposed to competitive nature. Therefore, there may be fewer protective factors against those beliefs coming from other students. These results demonstrate that there are more negative attitudes present in high school physical education classes in comparison to school sports and community sports at the high school level. These results are also reflected throughout the literature.

### 5.3 SEXUALITY, GENDER AND GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

In the 2015 Out on the Field study “73% of participants believed youth sport is not safe and welcoming for LGB people” (Denison et al., 2015, p. 12). Based on the results of this study, a similar statement could be made. The results indicate that there is an increase in homophobia, biphobia and transphobia for *Non-hetero* people especially in physical education classes with *Non-hetero* being referred to as feminine in a negative way. LGBT participants in the 2011 GLSEN study also reported an increase in bullying and harassment in their physical education classes. *Non-Hetero* also had a higher rate of social exclusion in their physical education classes based on sexuality, perceived sexuality, gender expression and gender identity which was also the case in Denison et al., 2015 and Symons et al., 2010 study. With this negative climate in physical education and sports settings, it is not surprising to see that *Non-Hetero* had the lowest perceived levels of current physical activity and sports participation with individuals feeling uncomfortable in change rooms and being judged based on sexuality. If one is uncomfortable and judged, it is easy to see how they do not feel welcomed in that space. The same feeling was

reflected in the Out on the Field study stating that 54% of men who are gay and 35% of women who are lesbians did not feel welcomed in sports and, in fact, another study showed that *Non-Hetero* youth were 46-72% less likely to be participating in team sports than their *Hetero* peers (Calzo, Roberts, Corliss, Blood, Kroshus et Austin, 2013).

High levels of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia in physical education classes and school sports were cited as reasons why participants were not out, including coaches implying that coming out would not be “good for the team”. There was a higher level of respondents stating that they were not out to anybody in their sports settings compared to the National Union of Students (2012) study. However, a similar percentage of participants stated that they were not out due to fear of not being accepted (National Union of Students, 2012). Therefore, not only do *Non-Hetero* participants not feel safe and not included in their high school physical education classes, school sports and community sports, but they are also not able to be their true selves.

The ideology of heterosexual and cis-gender males have been at the root of homophobia in sports (Ayvazo et al., 2009; Calzo et al., 2013; Clarke, 1998; Greendorfer et al., 1997). Sports were an arena of display for hegemonic masculinity where boys would show their strength and power to be considered as men. There was no room for gay men in sports because, to be gay meant going against this hegemonic masculinity (Symons et al., 2010). When boys and men are not performing to their teammates’ ‘standards’ homophobic and gendered slurs are used to attack their masculinity as a way to entice further participation. This creates an incredibly homophobic and sexist atmosphere. For women therefore, to participate in sports is going against this construct that sports are for ‘real men’. Women are thus considered lesbians upon entering the world of sports, because no ‘real woman’, in other words, ‘heterosexual woman’ can play this masculine activity. Based on these ideologies in sports, we see two constructs emerging in sports



and physical activity. That in which all men are forcibly heterosexual in sports and all women are, in consequence, lesbians (Ayvazo et al., 2009; Greendorfer et al., 1997; Lenskyj, 1991; Symons et al., 2010). With these beliefs in sports existing, it is thus not surprising that homophobia in sports have different levels of manifestation based on the gender of the individuals. The results herein indicate that men were reporting significantly more acts and actions of homophobia in their physical education classes, school sports and community sports than respondents who identified as women. Symons' et al., (2016) and Symons' et al., (2010) reported in their study that men also did face more homophobia than women in their organized sports, high school sports and physical education classes. Men in Northern Ontario also had the lowest participation rate in community sports at the high school level. The same was reported in Baiocco, Pistella, Salvati, Lovemo and Lucidi's (2018) study where there was a high dropout rate in sporting arenas with high levels of homophobic bullying. Zipp (2011) also reported a higher decline in participation for *Non-Hetero* boys in sports than *Hetero* boys.

Women in this study reported knowing more individuals' that identified as LGBTQ2-S in their sporting environments than men. This could also have an influence on the levels of homophobia in men versus women's sports seeing as the more an individual is exposed to a person that identified as LGBTQ2-S, the less negative attitudes one will have towards individuals that do not identify within the tradition heteronormative identity (Herek, 2002). Therefore, based off the historical context of men in sports, the construct of hegemonic masculinity within this arena and the levels of contact of woman versus men to LGBTQ2-S folks in sports, we can see that men are not only at a predisposed risk of having explicit homophobic acts and actions in their surroundings but they have less of an opportunity to get to know gay

men in sports. Thus, the continued lack of exposure to diversity that would aid in diminishing these negative homophobic behaviors and actions is problematic (Herek, 2002).

The location in which participants attended high school, thus the region in which they took physical education classes and participated in sports, was shown to have an impact on the experiences of homophobia. Those having attended high school in Northern Ontario (classified earlier as rural regions) showed an increase in homophobic events versus those having attended high school in other Ontario regions. The effects of homophobia and rurality have very rarely been studied within the sporting context and have in fact, never been studied in Ontario. Symon's et al. (2010) did report that in their Australian study those involved in sports in "small rural towns" (p. 7), did report higher levels of homophobic events.

In this study, respondents who attended high school in Northern Ontario reported higher rates of homophobic slurs when compared to respondents who attended high school in other Ontario regions. There was also an increase in social exclusion in physical education classes in along with a higher rate of social exclusion in community and school sports in Northern Ontario. Unfortunately, not only were there higher levels of homophobia in these settings, but there was also a lower level of interventions to stop these behaviors and actions in Northern Ontario. Based on these circumstances, it is thus not surprising that respondents who went to high school in Northern Ontario noted lower self-reported levels of current physical activity levels.

In summary, the results of increased homophobic events and attitudes that have been reported in this study follow the pattern of other studies. That of which, *Non-hetero* and male individuals within sporting contexts experience higher levels of homophobic events. The concept of homophobia and rurality in sports has however not been studied at great lengths and has in fact, never been observed in Ontario. We can see that in Northern Ontario, just as in other

studies, it is still those who are *Non-Hetero* and those who identify as male that face the greatest homophobia and barriers in sports. But when compared to those in other Ontario regions, those in Northern Ontario are faced with more of these negative attitudes and actions.

#### 5.4 FUTURE IMPACTS OF NEGATIVE PAST EXPERIENCE

There were many impacts of previous experiences in various sports on current physical activity levels. Although there were those who were not affected by past experiences, there are those who were. Participants recalled negative experiences with regards to gender, sexuality, bullying, skill level, body shaming lack of comfort in changerooms and judgement of peers made them abandon physical activity or shy away from physical activities/sports. The same results were reported in Rivers' (2014) study where a certain number of participants continued to recollect negative past experiences even after they had left the sport. In Symons and al (2017) study, a 'negative engagement with sport' was one of the biggest impacts of specific forms of homophobia in sporting arenas. According to Denison et al., in the Out on the Field 2015 report, "44% of gay men said negative experiences in school PE class turned them off" (p.12) from youth team sports. So, we can see that the negative impacts of homophobia in high school physical education classes, school sports and community sports not only have an impact on the participants of this study but was also the case in other studies. Such impacts include, among others, not wanting to keep going in sports, concealing one's sexuality in sports and not feeling comfortable in such settings.

Current rates of participation for respondents varied by both sexuality and geographical location. *Non-Hetero* participants from Northern Ontario had the lowest self-reported rate of their physical activity levels while *Non-Hetero* in other Ontario regions had the highest self-

reported rate, a rate that was above *Hetero* people in both these geographical locations. It is not surprising that *Non-Hetero* in Northern Ontario had the lowest perceived rate of physical activity considered their increased rates of homophobia they faced in all physical activity settings. Therefore, current levels of physical activity and sport participation for some participants have been affected by previous experiences in physical education classes, school sports and community sports.

## Chapter 6

### 6 CONCLUSION

In general, the different sport settings, gender, sexuality and geographical location were all factors identified as having various homophobic levels along with different impacts of sports participation. Physical education classes were shown to have an increased risk for both implicit and explicit homophobia when compared to school sports and community sports. Gender, sexuality and geographical location did play a factor in relation to witnessing homophobic behaviors. More specifically, *Non-hetero* men in Northern Ontario experienced an increase in homophobic behaviors, attitudes and actions directed towards them. Negative experiences in physical education classes, school sports and community sports, although not affecting everybody in the same manner, did have an impact of future sports participation. Those exposed to negative experiences did report that this impacted their current levels of physical activity. Therefore, not only are there still homophobic conditions in high school physical education classes, school sports and community sports, but these events have an impact on individuals long after they leave these settings.

#### 6.1 IMPLICATIONS

As of 2018, the Ontario Health and Physical education curriculum has changed, removing the 2015 curriculum and reverting back to the 1998 curriculum, negating many advances. The 2015 curriculum had included many changes such as the addition of sexual orientation and gender identity to the curriculum. For example, in the 2015 curriculum, students as early as grade 3 were introduced to certain differences, including sexual orientation and gender identity, that make individuals unique and why we should respect all people (Ministry of Education, 2015). As of September 2018, these changes have been reversed (Ministry of Education, 2018). When

taking into consideration the presence of the use of homophobic language and slurs in this study, the removal of key concepts in curriculum such as respect of individuals based on differences, it is possible that the rates of verbal homophobia will start to increase due to lack of knowledge and awareness of differences. Most participants in this study were students during the 2015 curriculum that did encompass this type of education and they still had experiences of homophobia in their physical education classes. Future students might not have this education thereby creating a less than ideal level of education and awareness.

Although the mention of sexual orientation and gender identity is still present in the language of the curriculum, is it merely included as an identity that we must take into consideration in order to ensure that all students feel safe and respected (Ministry of Education, 2018). As for the current goals of the curriculum, the exploration of different types of sexual orientation and gender identity are no longer present. In fact, it is stated that “parents and guardians are the primary educators of their children. As children grow and develop relationships with family members and others, they learn about appropriate behaviors and values, as well as sexuality” (Ministry of Education, 2018 p.33). But what happens to those children whom the parents and guardians are not informed of various sexualities and gender identities? Or the children whom the parents and guardians are homophobic? Only future studies will be able to try and quantify this impact.

Taking into consideration the negative experiences of youth in terms of sexuality and gender identity in this study, this curriculum change is perhaps ill advised. The inclusive nature of the 2015 curriculum ensured that students saw themselves within the curriculum and ensured that students get the proper education in order to be safe within their relationships. It also ensures

that all have the correct information in order to be respectful of all regardless of sexuality and gender identity.

Within the political climate in which we stand, Ontario studies, like this one, remind us that although homophobia has changed and evolved it is still present in today's society. Taking the time to educate the current generation, through things like a complete health curriculum, could in fact ensure a proper education where all students are respected regardless of who they are.

This study can be used to inform school and communities of what is going on within their physical education classes, school sports and community sports. Once they know of what is potentially happening, they can better equip teachers and coaches to intervene when homophobic events happen in order to make these settings safer and more welcoming for all. Giving teachers the right methods of intervention would prove valuable seeing as physical education classes were the most homophobic areas in this study. By giving tools to the physical education teachers who are also the one's teaching health class in high school, this could give a continuation of that need for respect for all and understanding of sexuality, gender identity.

## 6.2 LIMITATIONS

Although the survey does encompass questions of transphobia, it is geared more towards homophobia and biphobia as opposed to transphobia. For example, when asking why people were or were not out in their high school settings, the survey touched on aspects of sexuality and not gender. Based on the length of the current survey, it would be more efficient to do a survey to study homophobia and biphobia in physical education classes, school sports and community sports and a separate survey based on transphobia in these regions. This because, homophobia and biphobia versus transphobia, based on the literature, tend to manifest themselves in different

ways. Thus, to encompass both in the same survey would be lengthy and, in consequence, may have a lower response rate as opposed to having two surveys.

Furthermore, the definition of rural was used as a synonym of Northern Ontario in the literature review seeing as all the districts in Northern Ontario fit in the definition of rural as was defined in the literature review. It was however not considered that other districts outside of Northern Ontario fit this definition of rurality.

For some analysis based on gender and sexuality, the Levene's test for homogeneity was not respected. For this reason, results should be interpreted with care. Finally, it was assumed that most students would have taken their mandatory class of physical education and health in 9<sup>th</sup> grade as opposed to taking it in 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> grade. This could have brought a certain amount of confusion for participants when they were asked if they participated in physical education past 9<sup>th</sup> grade. The question could have been better formulated. For example, 'did you only participate in one credit of physical and health education in high school'.

### 6.3 FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Future studies could address the gap in literature of transphobia in sports and physical education setting in Northern Ontario. Furthermore, studies to see the effects of school Gay Straight Alliances' on attitudes in physical education classes and school sports would be interesting seeing as previous studies have shown more positive environments in school with such alliances. Future studies could also integrate more recent perspectives such as queer theory and masculinity in order to further frame the current situation in physical education and sports and to look at it from a more intersectional lens.



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## **Appendices**

### **Appendix A. Glossary of terms**

Bisexual: an individual “having emotional, romantic or sexual attraction to both men and women” (American Psychology Association, n.d.).

Exercise: an “activity that is planned, structured, repetitive, and aims to improve or maintain one or more components of physical fitness”<sup>1</sup> (World Health Organization, 2017).

Gay: a man “having emotional, romantic or sexual attraction” to another man (American Psychology Association, n.d.). The term gay has been used by both men and women to describe a person “having emotional, romantic or sexual attraction” to somebody of the same gender (American Psychology Association, n.d.).

Gender: the societal attributions to an individual’s sex. It is associated with the “socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for boys and men or girls and women” (American Psychology Association, 2002).

Heterosexism: “heterosexism is defined as the belief that heterosexuality is the only acceptable and viable life option” (Turner et Robinson’s, 1993). “Because of heterosexism, gays, lesbians and bisexuals constantly struggle with their self-esteem and make it much harder for them to integrate a positive sexual identity” (Blumenfeld et Raymond, 1993).

Homophobia: Although Pharr (1988) defined homophobia as “an irrational fear and/or intolerance of homosexuality”, we will look at homophobia within the lens of homonegativity as suggested by Krane in 1996 whereby “homonegativism... represents more purposeful negative attitudes and behaviors toward nonheterosexuals”.

Lesbian: a woman “having emotional, romantic or sexual attraction” to another woman (American Psychology Association, n.d.).

LGBT: Acronym used in brief for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender.

Physical activity: “any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that requires energy expenditure” (World Health Organization, 2017).

Physical Education: Academic discipline whose aim is to “develop an understanding of what they need in order to make a commitment to lifelong healthy, active living and develop the capacity to live satisfying, productive lives” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2015).

Sex: “Sex refers to a person's biological status and is typically categorized as male, female or intersex. There are a number of indicators of biological sex, including sex chromosomes, gonads, internal reproductive organs and external genitalia” (American Psychology Association, 2015).

Sport: “a competitive physical activity governed by formal rules and played by individuals and teams seeking to win... sport is an institution, a socially accepted set of attitudes and behaviors that guide our lives” (Calhoun, 1987)

Transgender: an individual is born with a sex that is different to an individual’s gender identity (American Psychology Association, 2002).



## **Appendix B. Recruitment scripts**

Facebook and Instagram:

Are you a post-secondary student who went to high school in Ontario? Please consider filling out the following survey to explore homophobia, biphobia and transphobia in high school physical education classes and sports. This survey is part of a Master of Human Kinetics Thesis project at Laurentian University. To fill out the survey click the following link:  
<https://redcap.laurentian.ca/surveys/?s=iaRFK6>. For any further questions or ethical concerns, please see contact information on the consent form attached to this survey.

Twitter specific recruitment (considering limit of character)

Curious about the effects of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia in high school PE classes? So are we! Please participate in our study by filling out our survey:  
<https://redcap.laurentian.ca/surveys/?s=iaRFK6>. For ethical concerns, see contact info on the survey's consent form.

Recrutement Communications Email ([communications@laurentian.ca](mailto:communications@laurentian.ca)) :

Hello,

My name is Anik Dennie I am a Master of Human Kinetics Student and I will be exploring homophobia, biphobia and transphobia in high school physical education classes and sports. This is a retrospective study and so, I am asking post-secondary students to reflect on their experiences in these setting while in high school and reporting how these experiences are affecting them now. Please consider filling out this online survey of a duration of 15-30 minutes. If you have any questions, concerns or ethical inquiries you can contact myself, my thesis supervisor Dr. Ann Pegoraro or Pauline Zanetti from the Laurentian University Ethics office.

To complete the consent form and the survey click on the following link:  
<https://redcap.laurentian.ca/surveys/?s=iaRFK6>

Anik Dennie  
[Adennie1@laurentian.ca](mailto:Adennie1@laurentian.ca)

Dr. Ann Pegoraro  
School of Human Kinetics  
Laurentian University  
[apegoraro@laurentian.ca](mailto:apegoraro@laurentian.ca)  
705.675.1151 ext. 1011  
1.800.461.4030 etc. 1011

Research Ethics Office  
[ethics@laurentian.ca](mailto:ethics@laurentian.ca)  
705.675.1151 ext. 1015

1.800.461.4030 ext. 1015

## **Appendix C. Letter of informed consent**



### **Informed Consent for Participation in Research Study**

I am interested in participating in this study on exploring homophobia, biphobia and transphobia in high school physical education classes and sports. This study is being conducted by Anik Dennie, Master of Human Kinetics Students, supervised by Dr. Ann Pegoraro.

If I agree to participate, my participation will consist in completing an online survey using Redcap. The survey will consist of both closed and open questions and will last between 15-30 minutes. The results will all be kept confidential and all identifiable information will be removed in order to ensure that no personal information is disclosed. No names will be attributed to the data, instead my results will be numerically coded. Only the researcher along with her supervisors will have access to them.

I understand that my participation is strictly voluntary, and I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without any penalty or not fully complete the questionnaire. In order to stop the study all, I have to do is close the web window of which I am using to fill out the survey. Any incomplete surveys will be registered in Redcap, but any incomplete surveys will be deleted from the study and so the answers will not be used in the analysis for this study. This is a default function of Redcap. There will be no future consequences linked to my participation or refusal to participate in the study. Potential benefits of this research include the identification of negative incidences in high school physical education classes and sports in order to enhance the safety of LGBTQ2-S students and allies in these contexts. Results are available upon request. If you wish to receive the results by email, please indicate your email in the area provided in the survey. Your email will be kept confidential and will only be used to send the results of the study. I understand that once the answers are stripped of all identifiable information, thus ensuring confidentiality, the data will be stored indefinitely in a safe location and may be used for future projects.

Participation in this study is not attributed to any type of risk. However, due to the sensitive and personal subject matter in question, it may induce negative emotional reactions. If these emotions do arise, I understand that I can stop the study without penalty and access the resources listed below if such need arises:

Canada 211

<http://www.211.ca/>

To find community based health and social service 24 hr (toll free) 211

Crisis Intervention Services: Health Science North

<https://www.hsnsudbury.ca/portalen/Programs-and-Services/Mental-Health-and-Addictions/Crisis-Intervention-Services>

24hr (Toll Free) 1.877.841.1101

Good 2 talk

<https://good2talk.ca/>

24 hr (toll free) 1.866.925.5454

LGBT Youthline

<http://www.youthline.ca/>

Phone: 1.800.268.9688

Text: 674.694.4275

Toll free Ontario wide support from Sunday to Friday from 4pm to 9:30pm

If I have any questions regarding the study in question, I may contact either:

Anik Dennie (B.E.P.S., MHK (cand.))

Laurentian University

[Adennie1@laurentian.ca](mailto:Adennie1@laurentian.ca)

Dr. Ann Pegoraro

School of Human Kinetics

Laurentian University

[apegoraro@laurentian.ca](mailto:apegoraro@laurentian.ca)

705.675.1151 ext. 1011

1.800.461.4030 ext. 1011

If I have any ethical concerns about this study, I can contact the Research Office, with the Research Ethics Board at Laurentian University:

Research Ethics Office

[ethics@laurentian.ca](mailto:ethics@laurentian.ca)

705.675.1151 ext. 1015

1.800.461.4030 ext. 1015

By checking the box below I acknowledge that I am 18 years of age or older, I have read and understood the consent form.

Thank you for your participation.

## **Appendix D. Survey tool**

### Part I- Demographic questions

The following section will ask questions about your demographics

How old are you? \_\_\_\_\_

In which geographic area did you grow up (spend the most of your childhood)?

- ☐ Algoma District
- ☐ Cochrane District
- ☐ Kenora District
- ☐ Manitoulin District
- ☐ Nipissing District
- ☐ Parry Sound District
- ☐ Rainy River District
- ☐ Sudbury District
- ☐ Thunder Bay District
- ☐ Timiskaming District
- ☐ Other Ontario District
- ☐ I did not grow up in Ontario

If you clicked other in the last question, please specify:

\_\_\_\_\_

In which geographic area did you attend high school?

- ☐ Algoma District
- ☐ Cochrane District
- ☐ Kenora District
- ☐ Manitoulin District
- ☐ Nipissing District
- ☐ Parry Sound District
- ☐ Rainy River District
- ☐ Sudbury District
- ☐ Thunder Bay District
- ☐ Timiskaming District
- ☐ Other Ontario district
- ☐ I did not attend high school in Ontario

If you clicked other in the last question, please  
specify: \_\_\_\_\_

In what language did you complete the majority of your high school education?

- ☐ English
- ☐ French
- ☐ Other

If you clicked other in the last question, please specify:\_\_\_\_\_

Are you currently enrolled in a post-secondary education institution in Ontario?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

What gender do you identify with (check all that apply)?

- ☐
- ☐ Man
- ☐ Woman
- ☐ Male to Female Transgender
- ☐ Female to Male Transgender
- ☐ Two-Spirit
- ☐ Intersex Man
- ☐ Intersex Woman
- ☐ None of the choices reflect my status or gender
- ☐ I would rather not say
- ☐ Other

If you clicked other in the last question, please specify:\_\_\_\_\_

What is your sexuality (check all that apply)?

- ☐ Heterosexual
- ☐ Gay
- ☐ Lesbian
- ☐ Bisexual
- ☐ Queer
- ☐ Questioning
- ☐ Other

If you clicked other in the last question, please specify:

\_\_\_\_\_

Do you know of anybody who identifies as lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer and/or transgender?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If yes, what is your relationship with that/those individuals?

---

## Part II- Physical Education classes

This section will ask multiple questions in regards to your experience in your high school physical education class('s).

Did you participate in Physical Education classes past 9th grade?

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No  
☐ If no, why? \_\_\_\_\_

Did you know of individuals that identified as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer and/or Transgender in your high school Physical Education class?

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

Answer the following question considering your experience in physical education classes

\*\*\*Although Pharr (1988) defined homophobia as "an irrational fear and/or intolerance of homosexuality", we will look at homophobia within the lens of homonegativity as suggested by Krane in 1996 whereby "homonegativism... represents more purposeful negative attitudes and behaviours toward nonheterosexuals". Biphobia include the same concept. Transphobia follows the same concepts of purposeful negative attitudes and behaviours towards non-cisgender individuals.

Examples of acts/actions of homophobia/biphobia/transphobia include calling individuals names such as "dyke", "faggot", verbal harassment, physical assessment, physical assault, calling one's masculinity/femininity into question etc. \*\*\*

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	I don't know
Acts/actions of homophobia/biphobia/transphobia was more common in Physical Education classes than in other classes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Acts/actions of homophobia/biphobia/transp	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

hobia was more common in Physical Education class change rooms than in the class itself.					
--	--	--	--	--	--

At what frequency did the following occur:	Never	Sometimes	Often	All the time
How often did you witness or have homophobic comments such as "that's so gay" directed at you in your Physical Education class?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How often did you witness or have homophobic slurs like "faggot", "dyke", etc. directed at you in your Physical Education class?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How often did you have your (or witnessed somebody have their) masculinity or femininity called into question during your Physical Education class?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How often were you told that you "play like a girl" or "throw like a girl" or experience (or witnessed) other references to being feminine in a negative manner in your Physical Education class?				
How often did you witness or were physically harassed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



based on sexuality, perceived sexuality, gender identity or gender expression in your Physical Education class?				
How often did you witness or were physically assaulted based on sexuality, perceived sexuality, gender identity or gender expression in your Physical Education class?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How often did you witness or have property deliberately stolen or damaged because of sexuality, perceived sexuality, gender identity or gender expression in your Physical Education class?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How often did you witness or was deliberately excluded from social groups because of sexuality, perceived sexuality, gender identity or gender expression in your Physical Education class?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you witnessed or was the victim of homophobic, biphobic or transphobic attitudes/ actions, did you or somebody in your surroundings step in?

- ☐ Never
- ☐ A couple of times
- ☐ Often
- ☐ All the time
- ☐ Not applicable

How did you identify in your Physical Education class?

- ☐ I identified as heterosexual

- ☐ I hid my sexuality
- ☐ My sexuality was implicitly known (my classmates knew but we didn't talk about it)
- ☐ My sexuality was explicitly known (my classmates knew, and we talked about it)
- ☐ My sexuality was publicly known (my classmates and people outside my class knew it)
- ☐ I was questioning my sexuality

Why did you choose to be partially out, not out, completely out etc. in your Physical Education class (benefits, challenges, problems, experiences etc.)? \_\_\_\_\_

Who in your Physical Education class knew your sexuality?

- ☐ Nobody
- ☐ Only my teacher
- ☐ Only one or two classmates
- ☐ My teacher and a couple of classmates
- ☐ Everybody knew including my teacher

If you weren't out to everybody, what statement(s) below explain why you didn't display your sexuality to your whole class? Check all that apply.

- ☐ I didn't accept my own sexuality
- ☐ I didn't feel the need to reveal my sexuality to others
- ☐ I didn't think my classmates would accept me
- ☐ I feared discrimination from my teacher
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ I did not identify as LGBTQ2-S in high school
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Not applicable

If you clicked other in the last question, please specify:

\_\_\_\_\_

Considering all of the choices in the last question, if you weren't out to everybody, what statement below explains the main reason you didn't display your sexuality to your whole class? Check only one option.

- ☐ I didn't accept my own sexuality
- ☐ I didn't feel the need to reveal my sexuality to others
- ☐ I didn't think my classmates would accept me
- ☐ I feared discrimination from my teacher
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ I did not identify as LGBTQ2-S in high school
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Not applicable

If you clicked other in the last question, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

If you were out (to some of all people in your class), what statement(s) below explain why you were out in your Physical Education class? Check all that apply

- ☐ There was already another "out" student in my class
- ☐ I rarely heard homophobic comments from my classmates/teacher
- ☐ I was already "out" with my friends before joining the class
- ☐ The class culture was already very open to diversity
- ☐ I was inspired by my teacher(s) coming out
- ☐ My classmates denouncing homophobic slurs and comments
- ☐ My teacher denounced homophobic slurs and comments
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Not applicable

If you clicked other in the last question, please specify:

\_\_\_\_\_

If you were out (to some of all people in your class), considering all of the choices in the last question what statement below explain the main reason you were out about your sexuality to your whole physical education class? Check one option only.

- ☐ There was already another "out" student in my class
- ☐ I rarely heard homophobic comments from my classmates/teacher
- ☐ I was already "out" with my friends before joining the class
- ☐ The class culture was already very open to diversity
- ☐ I was inspired by my teacher(s) coming out
- ☐ My classmates denouncing homophobic slurs and comments
- ☐ My teacher denounced homophobic slurs and comments
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Not applicable

If you clicked other in the last question, please specify:

\_\_\_\_\_

### Part III- School sports

This section will ask multiple questions in regards to your experience in your high school school sports

Did you participate in school sports in high school?

- ☐ Yes

☐ No

If no, why? \_\_\_\_\_

Did you know of individuals that identified as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer and/or Transgender in your high school sports?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Answer the following question considering your experience in school sports

\*\*\*Although Pharr (1988) defined homophobia as "an irrational fear and/or intolerance of homosexuality", we will look at homophobia within the lens of homonegativity as suggested by Krane in 1996 whereby "homonegativism... represents more purposeful negative attitudes and behaviours toward nonheterosexuals". Biphobia include the same concept. Transphobia follows the same concepts of purposeful negative attitudes and behaviours towards non-cisgender individuals.

Examples of acts/actions of homophobia/biphobia/transphobia include calling individuals names such as "dyke", "faggot", verbal harassment, physical assessment, physical assault, calling one's masculinity/femininity into question etc. \*\*\*

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	I don't know
Acts/actions of homophobia/biphobia/transphobia was more common in school sports than in classes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Acts/actions of homophobia/biphobia/transphobia was more common in school sports than in physical education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Acts/actions of homophobia/biphobia/transphobia was more common in the change rooms than during the school sport	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

At what frequency did the following occur:	Never	Sometimes	Often	All the time
How often did you witness or have homophobic comments such as "that's so gay" directed at you during your practices or school sporting events?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How often did you witness or have homophobic slurs like "faggot", "dyke", etc. directed at you during your practices or school sporting events?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How often did you have your (or witnessed somebody have their) masculinity or femininity called into question during your practices or school sporting events?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How often were you told that you "play like a girl" or "throw like a girl" or experience (or witnessed) other references to being feminine in a negative manner during your practices or school sporting events?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How often did you witness or were physically harassed based on sexuality, perceived sexuality, gender identity or gender expression during your	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

practices or school sporting events?				
How often did you witness or were physically assaulted based on sexuality, perceived sexuality, gender identity or gender expression during your practices or school sporting events?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How often did you witness or have property deliberately stolen or damaged because of sexuality, perceived sexuality, gender identity or gender expression during your practices or school sporting events?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How often did you witness or was deliberately excluded from social groups because of sexuality, perceived sexuality, gender identity or gender expression during your practices or school sporting events?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

In what school sport(s) did you participate in (check all that apply)?

- ☐ Alpine Skiing
- ☐ Badminton
- ☐ Baseball
- ☐ Basketball
- ☐ Cross Country Running
- ☐ Curling
- ☐ Field Hockey
- ☐ Field Lacrosse
- ☐ Football

- ☐ Golf
- ☐ Gymnastics
- ☐ Nordic Skiing
- ☐ Hockey
- ☐ Rugby
- ☐ Snowboarding
- ☐ Soccer
- ☐ Swimming
- ☐ Tennis
- ☐ Track & Field
- ☐ Volleyball
- ☐ Wrestling
- ☐ Other:

If you clicked other in the last question, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

Which women's school sport(s) do you think have the highest rates of homophobia, biphobia and/or transphobia (check all that apply)?

- ☐ Nordic Skiing
- ☐ Alpine Skiing
- ☐ Badminton
- ☐ Baseball
- ☐ Basketball
- ☐ Cross Country Running
- ☐ Curling
- ☐ Field Hockey
- ☐ Field Lacrosse
- ☐ Football
- ☐ Golf
- ☐ Gymnastics
- ☐ Hockey
- ☐ Rugby
- ☐ Snowboarding
- ☐ Soccer
- ☐ Swimming
- ☐ Tennis
- ☐ Track & Field
- ☐ Volleyball
- ☐ Wrestling
- ☐ Other:

If you clicked other in the last question, please specify:

\_\_\_\_\_

Which men's school sport(s) do you think have the highest rates of homophobia, biphobia and/or transphobia (check all that apply)?

- ☐ Nordic Skiing
- ☐ Alpine Skiing
- ☐ Badminton
- ☐ Baseball
- ☐ Basketball
- ☐ Cross Country Running
- ☐ Curling
- ☐ Field Hockey
- ☐ Field Lacrosse
- ☐ Football
- ☐ Golf
- ☐ Gymnastics
- ☐ Hockey
- ☐ Rugby
- ☐ Snowboarding
- ☐ Soccer
- ☐ Swimming
- ☐ Tennis
- ☐ Track & Field
- ☐ Volleyball
- ☐ Wrestling
- ☐ Other:

If you clicked other in the last question, please specify:

\_\_\_\_\_

If you witnessed or was the victim of homophobic, biphobic and/or transphobic attitudes/actions, did somebody in your surroundings step in?

- ☐ Never
- ☐ A couple of times
- ☐ Often
- ☐ All the time
- ☐ Not applicable

Did you avoid certain school sports because of fear of homophobia/biphobia/transphobia?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If yes, please specify what sport(s). \_\_\_\_\_

How did you identify in your school sport?



- ☐ I identified as heterosexual
- ☐ I hid my sexuality
- ☐ My sexuality was implicitly known (my teammates knew but we didn't talk about it)
- ☐ My sexuality was explicitly known (my teammates knew, and we talked about it)
- ☐ My sexuality was publicly known (my teammates and people outside my sport knew it)
- ☐ I was questioning my sexuality

Why did you choose to be partially out, not out, completely out etc. in your school sports (benefits, challenges, problems, experiences etc.)? \_\_\_\_\_

Who in your school sport knew your sexuality?

- ☐ Nobody
- ☐ Only my coach
- ☐ One or two teammates but not my coach
- ☐ My coach and a couple of teammates
- ☐ Everybody on my team (including coach)

If you weren't out to everybody, what statement(s) below explain why you didn't display your sexuality to your whole team? Check all that apply.

- ☐ I didn't accept my own sexuality
- ☐ I didn't feel the need to reveal my sexuality to others
- ☐ I didn't think my team will accept me
- ☐ I didn't think my opponent teams will accept me
- ☐ I feared discrimination from my coaches and officials
- ☐ I feared losing my spot on my team
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ I did not identify as LGBTQ2-S in high school
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Not applicable

If you clicked other in the last question, please specify:

\_\_\_\_\_

Considering all of the choices in the last question, if you weren't out to everybody, what statement below explains the main reason you don't display your sexuality to your whole team? Check one option only.

- ☐ I didn't accept my own sexuality
- ☐ I didn't feel the need to reveal my sexuality to others
- ☐ I didn't think my team will accept me
- ☐ I didn't think my opponent teams will accept me
- ☐ I feared discrimination from my coaches and officials

- ☐ I feared losing my spot on my team
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ I did not identify as LGBTQ2-S in high school
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Not applicable

If you clicked other in the last question, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

If you were out (to some of all people in your class), what statement(s) below explain why you were out about your sexuality to the whole team? Check all that apply.

- ☐ There was already another "out" athlete on my team
- ☐ I rarely heard homophobic comments from my teammates/coaches
- ☐ I was already "out" with my friends before joining the team
- ☐ The team culture was already very open to diversity
- ☐ I was inspired by a professional athlete coming out
- ☐ My sport had elite athletes publicly denouncing homophobic slurs and comments
- ☐ My coach denounced homophobic slurs and comments
- ☐ My teammates denounced homophobic slurs and comments
- ☐ I am part of a team in a gay league
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Not applicable

If you clicked other in the last question, please specify:

\_\_\_\_\_

If you were out (to some of all people in your class), considering all of the choices in the last question what statement below explain the main reason you were out about your sexuality to the whole team? Check one option only.

- ☐ There was already another "out" athlete on my team
- ☐ I rarely heard homophobic comments from my teammates/coaches
- ☐ I was already "out" with my friends before joining the team
- ☐ The team culture was already very open to diversity
- ☐ I was inspired by a professional athlete coming out
- ☐ My sport had elite athletes publicly denouncing homophobic slurs and comments
- ☐ My coach denounced homophobic slurs and comments
- ☐ My teammates denounced homophobic slurs and comments
- ☐ I am part of a team in a gay league
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Not applicable

If you clicked other in the last question, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Part IV: Community organized sports

This section will ask multiple questions in regards to your experience in community organized Sports

Did you participate in community/ organized sports while in high school?

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

If no, why? \_\_\_\_\_

Did you know of individuals that identified as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer or Transgender in your community/organized sport?

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

Answer the following question considering your experience in community/ organized sports  
\*\*\*Although Pharr (1988) defined homophobia as "an irrational fear and/or intolerance of homosexuality", we will look at homophobia within the lens of homonegativity as suggested by Krane in 1996 whereby "homonegativism... represents more purposeful negative attitudes and behaviours toward nonheterosexuals". Biphobia include the same concept. Transphobia follows the same concepts of purposeful negative attitudes and behaviours towards non-cisgender individuals.

Examples of acts/actions of homophobia/biphobia/transphobia include calling individuals names such as "dyke", "faggot", verbal harassment, physical assessment, physical assault, calling one's masculinity/femininity into question etc. \*\*\*

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	I don't know
Acts/actions of homophobia/biphobia/transphobia was more common in community/ organized sports than in my high school environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Acts/actions of homophobia/biphobia/transphobia was more common in community/ organized sports than in physical education class	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Acts/actions of homophobia/biphobia/transphobia was more common in the change rooms than during the community/ organized sports	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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At what frequency did the following occur:	Never	Sometimes	Often	All the time
How often did you witness or have homophobic comments such as "that's so gay" directed at you during your practices or community/organized sport?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How often did you witness or have homophobic slurs like "faggot", "dyke", etc. directed at you during your practices or community/organized sport?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How often did you have your (or witnessed somebody have their) masculinity or femininity called into question during your practices or community/organized sport?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How often were you told that you "play like a girl" or "throw like a girl" or experience (or witnessed) other references to being feminine in a negative manner during your practices or community/organized sport?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

How often did you witness or were physically harassed based on sexuality, perceived sexuality, gender identity or gender expression during your practices or community/organized sport?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How often did you witness or were physically assaulted based on sexuality, perceived sexuality, gender identity or gender expression during your practices or community/organized sport?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How often did you witness or have property deliberately stolen or damaged because of sexuality, perceived sexuality, gender identity or gender expression during your practices or community/organized sport?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How often did you witness or was deliberately excluded from social groups because of sexuality, perceived sexuality, gender identity or gender expression during your practices or community/organized sport?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

In what community/ organized sport(s) did you participate in (check all that apply)?

☐ Alpine Skiing

- ☐ Amateur wrestling
- ☐ Archery
- ☐ Athletics
- ☐ Badminton
- ☐ Ball Hockey
- ☐ Baseball
- ☐ Basketball
- ☐ Biathlon
- ☐ Bobsleigh
- ☐ Boccia
- ☐ Boxing
- ☐ Canoe/Kayak
- ☐ Cricket
- ☐ Cross country Skiing
- ☐ Curling
- ☐ Cycling
- ☐ Diving
- ☐ Fencing
- ☐ Figure skating
- ☐ Football
- ☐ Freestyle Skiing
- ☐ Goalball
- ☐ Golf
- ☐ Grass hockey
- ☐ Gymnastic
- ☐ Horse racing
- ☐ Ice hockey
- ☐ Judo
- ☐ Karate
- ☐ Lacrosse
- ☐ Lawn Bowling
- ☐ Luge
- ☐ Racquetball
- ☐ Ringette
- ☐ Rowing
- ☐ Rugby
- ☐ Sailing
- ☐ Skeleton
- ☐ Snowboard
- ☐ Soccer
- ☐ Softball
- ☐ Speed Skating
- ☐ Squash
- ☐ Swimming
- ☐ Synchronized swimming
- ☐ Table Tennis

- ☐ Triathlon
- ☐ Volleyball
- ☐ Water Polo
- ☐ Water skiing/weight board
- ☐ Weight Lifting
- ☐ Wheelchair Basketball
- ☐ Wheelchair Rugby
- ☐ Other, please specify

If you clicked other in the last question, please specify:

---

Which women's community/ organized sport(s) do you think have the highest rates of homophobia, biphobia and/or transphobia (check all that apply)?

- ☐ Alpine Skiing
- ☐ Amateur wrestling
- ☐ Archery
- ☐ Athletics
- ☐ Badminton
- ☐ Ball Hockey
- ☐ Baseball
- ☐ Basketball
- ☐ Biathlon
- ☐ Bobsleigh
- ☐ Boccia
- ☐ Boxing
- ☐ Canoe/Kayak
- ☐ Cricket
- ☐ Cross country Skiing
- ☐ Curling
- ☐ Cycling
- ☐ Diving
- ☐ Fencing
- ☐ Figure skating
- ☐ Football
- ☐ Freestyle Skiing
- ☐ Goalball
- ☐ Golf
- ☐ Grass hockey
- ☐ Gymnastic
- ☐ Horse racing
- ☐ Ice hockey
- ☐ Judo
- ☐ Karate
- ☐ Lacrosse

- ☐ Lawn Bowling
- ☐ Luge
- ☐ Racquetball
- ☐ Ringette
- ☐ Rowing
- ☐ Rugby
- ☐ Sailing
- ☐ Skeleton
- ☐ Snowboard
- ☐ Soccer
- ☐ Softball
- ☐ Speed Skating
- ☐ Squash
- ☐ Swimming
- ☐ Synchronized swimming
- ☐ Table Tennis
- ☐ Triathlon
- ☐ Volleyball
- ☐ Water Polo
- ☐ Water skiing/weight board
- ☐ Weight Lifting
- ☐ Wheelchair Basketball
- ☐ Wheelchair Rugby
- ☐ Other, please specify

If you clicked other in the last question, please specify:

---

Which men's community/ organized sport(s) do you think have the highest rates of homophobia, biphobia and/or transphobia (check all that apply)?

- ☐ Alpine Skiing
- ☐ Amateur wrestling
- ☐ Archery
- ☐ Athletics
- ☐ Badminton
- ☐ Ball Hockey
- ☐ Baseball
- ☐ Basketball
- ☐ Biathlon
- ☐ Bobsleigh
- ☐ Boccia
- ☐ Boxing
- ☐ Canoe/Kayak
- ☐ Cricket
- ☐ Cross country Skiing



- ☐ Curling
- ☐ Cycling
- ☐ Diving
- ☐ Fencing
- ☐ Figure skating
- ☐ Football
- ☐ Freestyle Skiing
- ☐ Goalball
- ☐ Golf
- ☐ Grass hockey
- ☐ Gymnastic
- ☐ Horse racing
- ☐ Ice hockey
- ☐ Judo
- ☐ Karate
- ☐ Lacrosse
- ☐ Lawn Bowling
- ☐ Luge
- ☐ Racquetball
- ☐ Ringette
- ☐ Rowing
- ☐ Rugby
- ☐ Sailing
- ☐ Skeleton
- ☐ Snowboard
- ☐ Soccer
- ☐ Softball
- ☐ Speed Skating
- ☐ Squash
- ☐ Swimming
- ☐ Synchronized swimming
- ☐ Table Tennis
- ☐ Triathlon
- ☐ Volleyball
- ☐ Water Polo
- ☐ Water skiing/weight board
- ☐ Weight Lifting
- ☐ Wheelchair Basketball
- ☐ Wheelchair Rugby
- ☐ Other, please specify

If you clicked other in the last question, please specify:

---

If you witnessed or was the victim of homophobic, biphobic and/or transphobic attitudes/actions, did somebody in your surroundings step in?

- ☐ Never
- ☐ A couple of times
- ☐ Often
- ☐ All the time
- ☐ Not applicable

If so, who? \_\_\_\_\_

Did you avoid certain community/ organized sports because of fear of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If yes, please specify what sport(s) \_\_\_\_\_

How did you identify in your community/ organized sports?

- ☐ I identified as heterosexual
- ☐ I hid my sexuality
- ☐ My sexuality was implicitly known (my teammates knew but we didn't talk about it)
- ☐ My sexuality was explicitly known (my teammates knew, and we talked about it)
- ☐ My sexuality was publicly known (my teammates and people outside my sport knew it)
- ☐ I was questioning my sexuality

Why did you choose to be partially out, not out, completely out etc. in your community/ organized sport (benefits, challenges, problems, experiences etc.)?

\_\_\_\_\_

Who in your community/ organized sports knew your sexuality?

- ☐ Nobody
- ☐ Only my coach
- ☐ One or two teammates but not my coach
- ☐ My coach and a couple of teammates
- ☐ Everybody on my team (including coach)

If you weren't out to everybody, what statement(s) below explain why you didn't display your sexuality to your whole team? Check all that apply.

- ☐ I didn't accept my own sexuality
- ☐ I didn't feel the need to reveal my sexuality to others
- ☐ I didn't think my team will accept me
- ☐ I didn't think my opponent teams will accept me
- ☐ I feared discrimination from my coaches and officials

- ☐ I feared losing my spot on my team
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ I did not identify as LGBTQ2-S in high school
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Not applicable

If you clicked other in the last question, please specify:

---

Considering all of the choices in the last question, if you weren't out to everybody, what statement below explains the main reason you didn't display your sexuality to your whole team? Check one option only.

- ☐ I didn't accept my own sexuality
- ☐ I didn't feel the need to reveal my sexuality to others
- ☐ I didn't think my team will accept me
- ☐ I didn't think my opponent teams will accept me
- ☐ I feared discrimination from my coaches and officials
- ☐ I feared losing my spot on my team
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ I did not identify as LGBTQ2-S in high school
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Not applicable

If you clicked other in the last question, please specify:

---

If you were out (to some of all people in your class), what statement(s) below explain why you were out about your sexuality to the whole team? Check all that apply.

- ☐ There was already another "out" athlete on my team
- ☐ I rarely heard homophobic comments from my teammates/coaches
- ☐ I was already "out" with my friends before joining the team
- ☐ The team culture was already very open to diversity
- ☐ I was inspired by a professional athlete coming out
- ☐ My sport had elite athletes publicly denouncing
- ☐ homophobic slurs and comments
- ☐ My coach denounced homophobic slurs and comments
- ☐ My teammates denounced homophobic slurs and comments
- ☐ I am part of a team in a gay league
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Not applicable

If you clicked other in the last question, please specify:

---

If you were out (to some of all people in your class), considering all of the choices in the last question what statement below explain the main reason you were out about your sexuality to the whole team? Check one option only.

- ☐ There was already another "out" athlete on my team
- ☐ I rarely heard homophobic comments from my teammates/coaches
- ☐ I was already "out" with my friends before joining the team
- ☐ The team culture was already very open to diversity
- ☐ I was inspired by a professional athlete coming out
- ☐ My sport had elite athletes publicly denouncing homophobic slurs and comments
- ☐ My coach denounced homophobic slurs and comments
- ☐ My teammates denounced homophobic slurs and comments
- ☐ I am part of a team in a gay league
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Not applicable

If you clicked other in the last question, please specify:

---

#### Part V: Current level of physical activity and sports

The following section will ask you about your current levels of physical activity

What kind of physical activity do you engage in? \_\_\_\_\_

In your opinion, are you

- ☐ Very physically active
- ☐ Moderately physically active
- ☐ Poorly physically active
- ☐ I am not physically active

On average, how many hours a week do you partake in physical activity or sports?

---

How has your experience in high school physical education classes affected your current state of physical activity? \_\_\_\_\_

How has your experience in high school sports affected your current state of physical activity?

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How has your experience in community/organized sports as a youth affected your current state of physical activity? \_\_\_\_\_

Did your high school have any anti-homophobic policies or plans in place to counter homophobia, biphobia and transphobia?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Please elaborate \_\_\_\_\_

Is there anything you would like to add? \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix E. Laurentian university ethics approval



### **APPROVAL FOR CONDUCTING RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS**

Research Ethics Board – Laurentian University

This letter confirms that the research project identified below has successfully passed the ethics review by the Laurentian University Research Ethics Board (REB). Your ethics approval date, other milestone dates, and any special conditions for your project are indicated below.

TYPE OF APPROVAL / New <b>X</b> / Modifications to project / Time extension	
<b>Name of Principal Investigator and school/department</b>	Anik Dennie (PI) School of Human Kinetics, Ann Pegoraro (Supervisor); Patricia Pickard & Joël Dickinson (Co-investigators)
<b>Title of Project</b>	The effects of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia in youth high school physical education classes and sports in Northern Ontario on the present levels of physical exercise and sports participation: a retrospective study
<b>REB file number</b>	6013762
<b>Date of original approval of project</b>	April 24, 2018
<b>Date of approval of project modifications or extension (if applicable)</b>	
<b>Final/Interim report due on:</b> <i>(You may request an extension)</i>	April 24, 2019
<b>Conditions placed on project</b>	

During the course of your research, no deviations from, or changes to, the protocol, recruitment or consent forms may be initiated without prior written approval from the REB. If you wish to modify your research project, please refer to the Research Ethics website to complete the appropriate REB form.

All projects must submit a report to REB at least once per year. If involvement with human participants continues for longer than one year (e.g. you have not completed the objectives of the study and have not yet terminated contact with the participants, except for feedback of final results to participants), you must request an extension using the appropriate LU REB form. In all cases, please ensure that your research complies with Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS). Also, please quote your REB file number on all future correspondence with the REB office.

Congratulations and best wishes in conducting your research.



Susan Boyko, PhD, Vice Chair, *Laurentian University Research Ethics Board*

